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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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TRB reports from Des Moines • Sidney Blumenthal on McGovern

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CORRESPONDENCE

NEWARK FIRES BACK

To the editors:

At its regular meeting of January 18, 1984, the Newark Municipal Council adopted a "MOTION CRITICIZING 'THE NEW REPUBLIC' MAGAZINE AND WRITER BRUCE FEIRSTEIN FOR UNPROVOKED RIDICULE OF THE CITY OF NEWARK IN AN ALLEGEDLY HUMOROUS ARTICLE ENTITLED 'NEW JERSEY BOMBS,' IN THE ISSUE DATED JANUARY 30, 1984."

Council members expressed distress that Mr. Feirstein makes Newark the ultimate target of his labored satire, in which he suggests that the battleship *New Jersey* bombard the benighted regions of the world with American consumer products. While he may claim some knowledge of New Jersey, Mr. Feirstein errs in assuming that the people of Newark will silently submit to any further attacks, whether from the 16-inch guns of a battleship or the slingshot of a would-be wit.

The council has come to expect pointless and tasteless wisecracks from television comedians and talk-show hosts, but not from a distinguished publication like THE NEW REPUBLIC. The council feels this article violates your long tradition of literate, humane commentary. Perhaps Mr. Feirstein intended no harm with his gratuitous remarks, and only sought a quick, cheap final laugh by invoking the name of Newark. In any event, the Council hopes the author can devote all his time to his first novel, and leave humorous writing to those with a defter touch, and some degree of sensitivity.

FRANK D'ASCENSIO
City Clerk
Newark, New Jersey

POLICY CROSS-EXAMINATION

To the editors:

Morton Kondracke's "The Candidates Cross-Examined" (TNR, February 6) points out that on October 28 President Reagan enjoyed an approval rating of 57 percent (which subsequently dropped to 47 percent on December 13). He also states that 61 percent of Americans believe that Reagan's handling of foreign policy " . . . is increasing the chances of war." Is it not illogical for a lesser percentage of people to approve of Reagan's foreign policy than to believe that such a policy will possibly threaten the peace? Either these polls indicate that Americans support a policy that contains dangerous elements or one or both of these polls are inaccurate (or irrelevant) indicators of what people really believe. Let us hope that the latter is the case.

MARK SIMENHOFF
KRISTIN HARRINGTON
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

It is reckless to charge the Democrats with "a foreign policy of weakness and retreat." To oppose Reagan's provocative intervention in Nicaragua and his mindless policy in Lebanon is necessary and honorable. The truth is also that putting new missiles ten minutes from

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They led Hillary to the top of Mount Everest. He led them out of its shadow.
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUE 3,607

WASHINGTON, D.C. — MARCH 5, 1984

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RECEIVED FEB 21 Ambassador College Library

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Volume 190, Number 9, Issue 3,607, March 5, 1984. (Printed on February 15, 1984.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated January 9 & 16, July 16 & 23, August 13 & 20, and September 17 & 24, 1984) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $45; foreign, $67; Canada, $55. Back issues, $2 (includes postage & handling). ©1984 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC. Indexed in Readers' Guide and Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **Subscribers:** Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscriptions inquiries to **Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 955, Farmingdale, NY 11737-0001.** For subscription problems call **800-645-9559** (In New York State call 800-732-9119).

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FROM WASHINGTON

THE MOOD IN IOWA

Des Moines

What is the mood in Iowa? By the time some people read this, no one will care anymore. In the weeks leading up to the Iowa caucuses on February 20, though, it is a matter of some concern to the nation and of obsessive concern to several hundred pols and journalists.

Advance word had it that the people of Iowa—ordinarily civic-minded to a fault—had been struck by an epidemic of apathy. As my plane circled for landing in Des Moines (and I have always longed to write those words—except for the words "Des Moines"), I expected to observe scenes out of *The Day After*: gaunt, bug-eyed citizens sprawled across the landscape, dying a slow and painful death from an overdose of Democratic Presidential candidates. But everyone seemed up and about. Although it pleases them to strike a patronizing attitude about all the fuss and feathers, Iowans clearly enjoy the quadrennial attention.

What Iowans enjoy even more is the absurd excess of political influence they get because their delegate-selection caucuses come first, an accident of recent history that now seems to be writ in stone. As Walter Mondale said February 11 in the *Des Moines Register* Candidates' Debate (an American political tradition since 1980), "On February 20 the voters of Iowa will be the most powerful citizens on earth." That is one reason why non-Iowan taxpayers will continue to pay billions for farm price supports. (The average Iowan "small farmer" owns land and equipment worth more than half a million dollars.) Iowa and New Hampshire together conspire to keep gun control—favored by a large majority of Americans—off the political agenda of even the most adventurous Democratic contenders.

Signs and leaflets at the Des Moines airport urge visitors to take advantage of the "Iowa Caucus Information Center" downtown for free coffee, maps, telephones, and "a broad section of citizens in Greater Des Moines" who can be interviewed about aspects of life in Iowa from civil rights and agriculture to "substance abuse." Of course we're not really in Iowa. We're in Campaignland, a mystical floating village that merely overlaps with real places every few years, like Brigadoon.

There's an old joke about the Jewish man rescued after twenty years alone on a desert island, who's built himself two synagogues. Why the second? "Oh," he explains to his rescuers, "that's the one I wouldn't be caught dead in." When in Des Moines, the traveling political circus has two equally gloomy old hotels to satisfy this universal human need: the Hotel Savery, where everybody wants to stay, and the Hotel Unsavery (actually called the Fort Des Moines), where you go only if you can't get a room at the Savery. There's also a shiny new Marriott, but Democrats generally avoid it because of Mr. Marriott's Republican associations.

At the bar of the Savery, where even Unsavery types do their drinking, journalists exchange scuttlebutt and campaign workers circulate, peddling their latest implausible scenarios. If Cranston comes in third in Iowa, then Mondale is run over by a truck. . . . When someone like the chairman of the Iowa Democratic Party walks in, an electric charge goes through the room, as if Henry Kissinger or John Travolta had just arrived. He works the crowd, reveling in the evanescent glamor of knowing something about Iowa politics.

In the Savery coffee shop the morning of the debate, George McGovern sat alone, attracting less attention than campaign aides of the more prominent candidates. By that evening, he was a star. He had created the emotional high point of the debate (indeed, just about the only emotional point of any sort) with his moving plea to potential supporters: "Don't throw away your conscience."

Jesse Jackson was quick to sense and co-opt McGovern's elevated status. At a rally that night in a high school auditorium, he amazed a sparse crowd of Iowa blacks and his usual large contingent of journalists (CBS alone has two camera crews following Jackson full-time; it's called a "body watch," meaning they don't want to miss it if he gets shot) by bringing out "Brother George McGovern" and announcing—apparently to McGovern's surprise as well—that they were going to campaign together. As Jackson inimitably put it, "A choir can sing with more than one voice and still sound good."

What has come over McGovern? He used to be a whiner. Now he's relaxed and seignorial. Well, why not say it? He's Presidential. While the others prattle vacuously about leadership, he acts like a leader, dispensing calm wisdom about how the campaign should be conducted. His left-wing platform is neither demagogic gobbledygook like Jackson's nor clotted with prosaic detail like Gary Hart's. He's even become witty, making amiable jokes about himself as well as the other candidates.

Fritz Hollings, who's supposed to be the witty one, now flails wildly with his rapier, aiming low and often running it into the ground. In the debate, John Glenn asked Hollings a good question: Why had Hollings, a reformed segregationist, filibustered against Glenn's bill to apply the Civil Rights Act to Congressional staff? Hollings launched into a weak "some of my best friends" rap about how he'd hired blacks and women, then sneered witlessly: "So you can run around palaverin' about introducin' a bill. . . . You all confused in that capsule of yours." The laughter was nervous.

Another candidate who's been reading his reviews too much is Hart, whose "Youthquake '84" routine is aging fast. It's a "contest between the future and the past" because "the new leadership of this country wants to put leadership above politics." Hart doesn't want to "move backward," he wants to "move [sideways? no . . .] forward." And so on. When he gets off "themes" and gets onto policies, Hart comes across as sensible and smart. But this stuff! A lot of people in Iowa think that compared to the future, the past looks pretty good.

John Glenn's campaign is already a distant memory, and anything he may have said in its downward course is not even that. Glenn's performance has always been of the "plug in the cassette" variety, but now the machine seems to have broken down. Asked about the

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
MARCH 5, 1984

HELTER SHELTER

Is the stock market trying to tell us something? Its recent decline coincided with testimony on Capitol Hill by Paul A. Volcker, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, who said in his usual stern tones that something had better be done about those $200 billion deficits. Mr. Volcker said that a deficit reduction of $125 billion over two years would suffice, but he wasn't sanguine about the prospects for success. The courageous Martin Feldstein, the chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors and a frequent target of bully boys in the White House and beyond, concurred.

When you look at the budget, it becomes clear that you can't narrow the deficit by $125 billion through spending cuts alone. Taxes have to rise. Even the Reagan Administration now recognizes this brutal verity. Mr. Reagan, of course, is waiting until after the election before doing anything serious. In the meantime, he is talking in friendly tones about "tax simplification," which is an issue that a smart Democratic candidate could ride all the way to the White House. The best tax simplification bill now in Congress is a Democratic one, the Bradley-Gephardt "Fair Tax." The Fair Tax eliminates almost all deductions and credits and reduces tax rates sharply—but keeps them graduated. Taxpayers would be in lower brackets, but their new rates would apply to virtually all their income: they wouldn't get deductions for putting money into shelters like horse breeding. Most taxpayers would end up owing the I.R.S. close to what they owe it now.

It's important to understand that tax reform alone won't solve the problem of the deficit. Bradley-Gephardt changes the way we collect taxes, not the amount we collect. But tax reform is a precondition for tax increases. Americans oppose tax increases under the current code not just because they think the level of taxation is already too high but also because they think the system is unfair. A taxpayer who makes $30,000 a year and pays $5,000 in federal taxes would probably be willing to pay $6,000 if he knew that someone making $100,000 a year and now paying $3,000 would have to pay $20,000 or more. Tax simplification would certainly make tax increases more palatable to the public.

A simplified tax would have two other advantages over the current horrendously complicated, patched-together system. First, it would be simple. Right now nearly half of all tax returns are filed with professional help. You can file a Bradley-Gephardt return on a postcard. Second, it would direct investment out of unproductive shelters and into the economic mainstream.

The Adminstration is now studying major changes in the tax laws, and it's almost certain that, if Reagan is returned to office, he'll be offering a Republican version of Bradley-Gephardt. But reform—and deficit reduction—will have to wait until after the November election. In the meantime, it's been another wonderful year for promoters of tax shelters. In 1983 sales of registered limited partnerships in real estate deals, llama farms, oil-and-gas ventures, and other pursuits that give investors large tax write-offs rose 52 percent over 1982, reports Robert A. Stanger & Co., a firm that keeps track of such things. (See "How To Beat The I.R.S.," TNR, May 16, 1983.) Since Mr. Reagan took office, sales of these tax shelters have nearly doubled.

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It wasn't supposed to be like this. Supply-siders assured us three years ago that one of the many salutary effects of a cut in personal income tax rates would be that billions would flow from tax shelters into more productive taxable investments. Who needs a shelter, the argument went, if your tax rate has been cut to a reasonable level? And even hard-core supply-siders have to admit that tax rates, in 1984, are down to a reasonable level. In 1980 the 50 percent bracket began at $60,000 on taxable income for married couples filing jointly; this year it begins at $162,400. In 1980 a single person making $50,000 in gross income, with $10,000 in deductions, was in a 49 percent bracket; today his bracket is 38 percent.

But instead of slowing down, tax shelter sales have boomed—fueled in part by a 1981 change that allowed speeded-up depreciation—and some of the largest financial institutions have entered a field that was once the province of sleazy operators. In 1983, for example, a subsidiary of American Express sold $471 million worth of real estate shelters and Merrill Lynch $261 million. E.F. Hutton and Prudential/Bache rank among the top ten peddlers of oil-and-gas deals. In addition, shelters are providing more shelter. We recently heard of a real estate deal from a respectable promoter that offered a 20-for-1 write-off in the first year: you invested $1,000 and received $20,000 in tax deductions.

When it came to shelters, supply-side logic was simply wrong. As a Washington tax accountant with a Big Eight firm explained, "The tax cuts meant that the shelters had to change. In 1980 when you had a top rate of 70 percent, a shelter that gave you a 1.5-to-1 or 1.7-to-1 write-off was a good deal. Now, your average shelter gives you a 2.3-to-1 or 2.5-to-1 write-off." In other words, before the Reagan cuts, rich investors were looking for shelters in which they could invest $10,000 and get $15,000 or $17,000 in tax deductions the first year. Today, with a top rate of 50 percent, they need deductions of $23,000 or $25,000 to save the same amount on their taxes. And they're getting them.

It now seems to be dawning upon the Reagan Administration that tax cuts won't chase tax shelters away, and that, if anything, they make shelters worse. The fiscal 1985 budget, which was announced on February 1, contains proposals that attack some of the quirks in the tax code that can result in large deductions. One of those proposals curtails what the Treasury calls "premature accruals." These are usually features of real estate or equipment-leasing deals. For example, you pay $10,000 to buy a limited partnership in a syndicate that buys a building for $2 million. The syndicate puts up only $100,000 in cash and borrows the rest. The interest accrues—which means that the partnership is liable for it and can count it as an expense on its tax return, but the partners don't actually have to shell out any cash for several years. If the interest rate is 14 percent on a $1.9 million loan, it means that a $10,000 investor can deduct $26,600 each year—in addition, of course, to those big depreciation write-offs that the 1981 tax law allows. The President now says he wants to stop this accrual nonsense.

The budget also puts the Administration on record as being in favor of restrictions on "tax-exempt leasing." Currently tax-exempt entities like colleges and municipal governments can "sell" buildings and other property to investors who then "lease" them back. (Bennington College started it all last summer.) New York, for example, could make the old joke come true by selling the Brooklyn Bridge to investors, who would then get to depreciate it over fifteen years—the tax code assuming fantastically that such structures simply disappear in a decade and a half. The investors would then lease the bridge back to the city at a decent rental—grateful for the tax savings they were getting. Over the past few years, such "sale-lease-backs" have been among the hottest tax shelters going. It now appears certain that the bill attacking them, introduced by Democratic Representative J. J. Pickle of Texas, will pass during this session.

But don't get too excited. The Reagan budget estimates that closing the leaseback loophole will bring in $1.7 billion in fiscal 1985, $2.7 billion in 1986, and $4.0 billion in 1987. The accrual crackdown and a few other proposed changes will add a total of $12.3 billion in tax revenues over three years. That's not much of a dent in the deficit. Furthermore, history shows that piecemeal attacks on shelters aren't very effective. In the past ten years, Congress has succeeded in plugging dozens of loopholes, but new fissures in the dike appear immediately. Some of the best minds in America are devoted to contriving ways to reduce the tax bills of rich people and corporations. The existing tax code can't be made airtight. Sharp lawyers and accountants will keep finding gaps.

The solution has to be more sweeping. All of the major Democratic candidates have mumbled praise for Bradley-Gephardt, but none has made tax simplification—the elimination of all, or almost all, deductions and credits—a prime campaign issue. That's a mistake. If Democrats don't seize upon tax simplification as a way to make the system more equitable and to raise revenues without raising hackles, then Ronald Reagan will claim it as his own.

NOTEBOOK

□ YOU PROBABLY don't remember Chris Giannou, M.D. He was a star player in television's living room war from Lebanon during the summer of 1982. Described then by the media only as a Canadian doctor tending to Palestinian victims of the fighting, he was the source, articulate and eager but seemingly also neutral and humane, of much of the false information which so distorted Western reportage of the war. He speaks to the Council on Foreign Relations this month. His topic: "Whither the P.L.O.?" Turns out he's been a P.L.O. operative all along, serving under Yasir Arafat's brother in the Palestine Red Crescent, not to be confused with your local Red Cross. During the recent fighting in Lebanon, the Council's blurb

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for his speech tells us, Mr. Giannou "spent time with Yasir Arafat on a daily basis." So now we know. He has come clean, and even the press must know that it was had again.

□ THIRTY YEARS AGO, the cold war was raging, the right wing was riding high in Washington, radical reform was in retreat, there was altogether too much exhaustion and foolishness in what passed for an American left—and if you were dissatisfied with these aspects of the status quo, you were well advised to pick up a copy of a quarterly magazine called *Dissent*. Who says there's no continuity in American life? *Dissent* has become indisputably the voice and conscience of the democratic left in this country. It remains, as it has been all along, impervious to political trendiness of any kind and faithful to a deeply democratic political vision. It's always been a very good magazine, and in its maturity it seems to be getting steadily better—and we don't say that only because so many of the same writers appear both there and here. (The current, thirtieth anniversary issue of *Dissent* has a dozen articles by regular contributors to TNR, including *Dissent*'s co-editors, Irving Howe and Michael Walzer.) In case your local drugstore doesn't carry *Dissent*, it's available for $14 a year from 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10007.

□ IF THERE IS ANY consensus on U.S. policy in Central America, it is on the question of military aid to the murderous government of Guatemala. The Democratic House Foreign Affairs Committee opposes it. The Republican Senate Foreign Relations Committee opposes it. Jimmy Carter opposed it. Henry Kissinger opposes it. But the Reagan Administration, with its curious interpretation of bipartisanship, supports it. The State Department announced on January 30 that the United States will sell $2 million in spare helicopter parts to Guatemala. With working helicopters, the Guatemalan military says it will be able to carry its war against leftist guerrillas to remote Indian villages. This war, by accounts from refugees, church groups, and human rights organizations, includes the hacking to death of children, the razing of entire villages, and the ordering of people to kill their neighbors. The Administration notes that because the Guatemalans are paying cash for the parts, the transaction is a "sale" and not "assistance." Therefore, says the State Department, no one from either party should object. If this is the bipartisanship that the Administration wants, it is a bipartisan ship of fools. All aboard.

□ ACADEMIC RIVALRIES are so bitter, it is said, because the stakes are so small. Not always, though. There are intellectual and scholarly differences that are of considerable consequence. The interpretation of the Second World War, for example. This question has been part of what is at issue in the famous rivalry between Hugh Trevor-Roper and A. J. P. Taylor, England's celebrity historians. Mr. Trevor-Roper's advocacy of the Hitler diaries last year brought smiles to the faces of his enemies. Now comes Mr. Taylor with a pronouncement, less public but more pernicious, that makes his rival's recent mistake look positively pretty. "Twenty years ago," he writes in *The London Review of Books*, "I published a book about the origins of the Second World War." True. "At the time it was dismissed as wrongheaded and controversial." Still true. "Now it has become the accepted version for most people." Sorry. The arguments against Mr. Taylor's thesis are as good now as they were then. He states his thesis again: "No evidence that Hitler planned aggressive war has ever been produced." The Hossbach Protocol, you see, has been shown to be a forgery. As if the Hossbach Protocol was necessary to prove that Hitler did not plan for peace. Mr. Taylor continues: "It would be going too far to suggest that Great Britain and France started the Second World War by declaring it, but they did declare it all the same." Well, then, put Churchill in the dock. Maybe he was the war criminal. It is hard to know what exactly to say to this low literalness disguised as high learning. Mr. Trevor-Roper could not recognize a forgery. Mr. Taylor cannot recognize a fact.

□ GREAT MOMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS: On February 9 the U.N. Human Rights Commission was discussing the Middle East, with special (exclusive) reference to what it calls Palestine. Every speaker criticized Israel. Nothing new here. The last to denounce was the East German representative. At which point the Israeli delegate stood up and gave the Council the number of Nazi Part membership card issued to the very same East German representative in 1944.

□ TEN YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "In essence Richard Nixon relies upon the Presidency to protect and preserve his Presidency. He said that he'd cooperate with the Judiciary Committee's inquiry 'in any way consistent with my constitutional responsibility to defend the office of the Presidency against any action which would weaken that office and the ability of future Presidents to carry out the great responsibilities that any President will have.' When he was asked whether he'd reconsider his determination never to resign if it became evident that his continuance in office doomed the Republican Party to 'disastrous defeat' in this year's elections, he answered: 'No. I want my party to succeed but, more important, I want the Presidency to survive, and it is vitally important in this nation that the Presidency of the United States not be hostage to what happens to the popularity of a President at one time or another.' Congressmen will be less likely to impeach, Senators less likely to convict, if they are convinced that 'the popularity of a President' rather than the conduct of this President is the controlling factor. In the unlikely event that he gets by with his conception and defense of 'the office of the Presidency,' Mr. Nixon may be enabled to withhold from the Judiciary Committee White House evidence that would make impeachment certain, conviction probable, and resignation wise." ("Desperation," by John Osborne, March 9, 1974.)

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Yuri, we hardly knew ye.

CHERNENKO'S TURN

ON NOVEMBER 10, 1982, President Reagan was told that Leonid Brezhnev had died and that his successor would be a certain Konstantin Chernenko. Chernenko had the votes in the Politburo, the then White House Kremlinologist, Richard Pipes, told the then national security adviser, William Clark. After all, Chernenko was the party apparat's candidate as well as Brezhnev's personal choice.

The report of Chernenko's elevation was premature. In that first round he was passed over in favor of Yuri Andropov who, many Kremlinologists believed, would never get the job because of the Politburo's reluctance to give supreme command to a man who had headed the K.G.B. for fifteen years. The party, it was argued, still saw itself in its classic role, defined by Lenin, as "the vanguard of the proletariat," and retained a delicate sensitivity, hard for outsiders to understand, about giving the impression of ceding that role to its mailed fist, the security apparatus.

Andropov defeated Chernenko by forming an alliance with the military. It was the K.G.B. and the Red Army versus the party—an epic struggle of bureaucracies. The image that leapt to mind was not so much King Kong versus Godzilla as King Kong and Godzilla together ganging up on the mad scientist who had created them both. In fact, the struggle was fought in terms of early retirements and quick promotions, and in arcane arguments over the primacy of "tighter discipline" and "higher productivity" as against "listening to the masses." Andropov, a Westernizer in the rubrics of Russian history, embraced the first set of slogans; Chernenko, a Slavophile, stood for the latter phrase.

Perhaps self-confidence also had something to do with Andropov's victory. Even while Brezhnev was still alive, Andropov made no secret of his conviction that he, Andropov, was the best qualified Soviet leader since Lenin. He had streamlined the K.G.B.; he knew Eastern Europe from his years as the liaison official with the fraternal parties of the peoples' democracies; he had played a key role as ambassador in Budapest during the Hungarian revolution of 1956. He spoke an educated Russian, and even a smattering of English and German.

On the other hand, Chernenko was the very image of the plodding, quiet, dour apparatchik. He was a poor public speaker who stumbled over words obviously written for him by somebody with a better education. He owed his career entirely to Brezhnev. He became Brezhnev's sidekick in the early 1950s, when Brezhnev was party secretary in the republic of Moldavia, on the Romanian border, and Chernenko was in charge of "agitprop"—the agitation and propaganda department, the party's version of public relations. In 1956, when Brezhnev was promoted and sent to Moscow, he brought Chernenko with him. A year after Brezhnev replaced Nikita Khrushchev as party secretary in 1964, Chernenko became chief administrator of the Central Committee's record-keeping department. In 1978 Chernenko joined the Politburo as a full member, after an unusually brief apprenticeship of eighteen months as a "candidate member."

Throughout the late 1970s, Chernenko was always at Brezhnev's side when he had trouble getting up from a chair or stumbled on the steps, which happened with increasing frequency as excessive drinking, eating, and smoking began to take their toll. In 1979 Chernenko accompanied Brezhnev to the summit with Jimmy Carter in Vienna. The image he left with the Americans was that of a stiff, taciturn lackey to Brezhnev. Sitting next to the American ambassador in Moscow, Malcolm Toon, who speaks fluent Russian, Chernenko could do no more than mumble a few words about the weather. In the end, Toon recalls, it was Chernenko who led away the drunk, incoherent Brezhnev.

Chernenko's apartment in Moscow was just below Brezhnev's, and Chernenko was a frequent visitor to Brezhnev's kitchen, an honor shared with a handful of top officials. What's more, their wives were friends, and the two families often took their vacations together, at a Black Sea spa reserved for Communist leaders. A Soviet joke summed up their relationship: Brezhnev has been dead for quite some time, but Chernenko hasn't told him.

Chernenko's ties to Brezhnev, who clearly stayed on for too long, ended up hurting his chances in 1982. What changed in Chernenko's favor this time around?

First, it appears that Andropov, who clung to power to the very end, made no arrangements for a succession. Apparently he thought he would recover; only a few weeks ago he hinted, in a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau, that he would like to visit Canada soon. It seems likely that his protégés in the Politburo were without a candidate of their own.

Second, Andropov's impatience with party apparatchiks—he fired hundreds of them—and his sharp condemnation of corruption in high places aroused resentment in party circles. This time the party might have insisted on putting its own man in the saddle. And unlike Andropov's protégés, who had to wait for word from the boss, the party might well have been fully prepared to take charge the moment Andropov died.

Third, Chernenko appears to be in the pink of health. Andropov's problems with his liver, heart, and pancreas were well known in higher party circles for years, partly because he went each year to health resorts in Czechoslovakia. But Chernenko is not known to have any ailments, and he is moderate in his eating and drinking. (Perhaps he had to keep in shape to prop up Brezhnev for all those years.) Like his counterpart in the White House, Chernenko, who comes from sturdy peasant stock, might reasonably expect years of full and active life.

Fourth, Chernenko might conceivably have something to offer in the way of alleviating the Soviet Union's chronic

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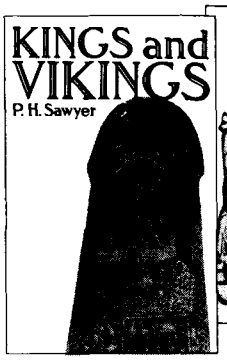

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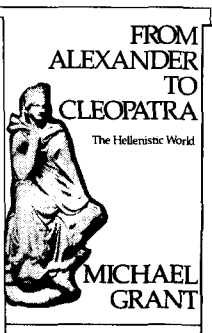

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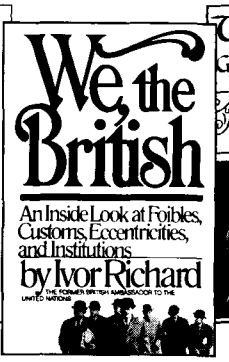

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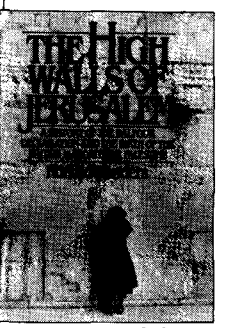

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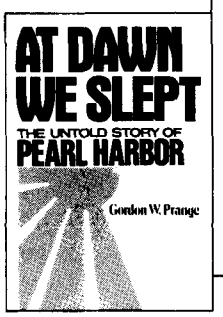

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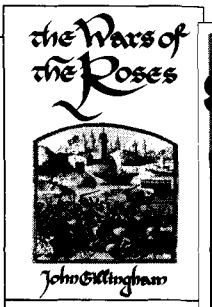

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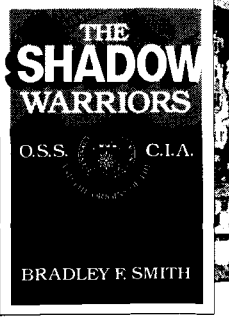

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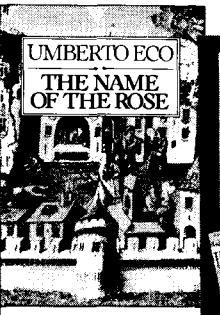

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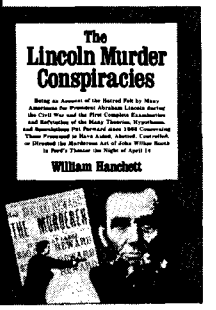

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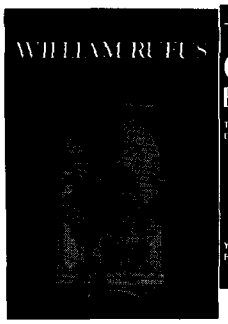

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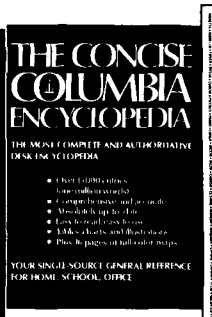
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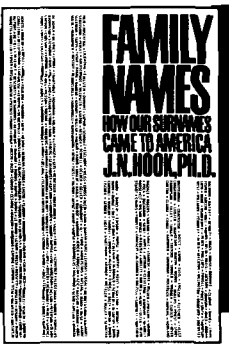

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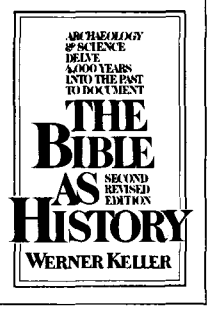
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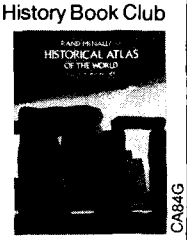

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problems of public apathy and worker inefficiency. He may not have Andropov's cutting wit and worldly ways, but he has published a number of articles worth perusing. It is highly unlikely that he wrote the articles himself, but his endorsements of somewhat unorthodox views suggest that he might fashion a niche for himself in Russian history.

One of his books, titled *The U.S.S.R. and Human Rights* and published in 1981, is conventional propaganda. It argues that the Soviet Union must not permit the United States to exploit the issue of human rights against the Soviet Union when the socialist countries are in fact in the very forefront of the struggle for human rights. In his other book, also published in 1981 and titled *Selected Speeches and Articles*, he appears as something of a populist. He calls for attention to be paid to the wishes of "the non-party masses." He urges greater participation in the decision-making process of such non-party institutions as local councils and trade unions. He cites the Polish example as a warning of what might happen if the party isolates itself from the masses. He recommends more openness and candor in discussions within the party.

When he was working for the Central Committee, Chernenko upgraded the position of the official who deals with letters sent to the party or the party secretary general; he suggested that such letters be answered—which was by no means routine.

TO SUGGEST from such evidence that Chernenko will institute anything like democratization is absurd. But his emphasis on "the masses" is unusual and says something about his priorities. Kremlinology is a dowser's search for a hidden treasure of personal conviction that may lie in between lines meticulously edited to disguise private feelings and deviation from the doctrine. At least to some experts, Chernenko's statements hint at a stubborn streak of individuality. No responsible Kremlinologist would have predicted from an analysis of Khrushchev's speeches under Stalin's rule that de-Stalinization would be Khrushchev's historic role. Behind Chernenko's impassive face and taciturn manner might lurk another man.

When he visited the United States in 1969, then as a minor official, he stayed for less than a week and spent three days in Washington. He asked to see three places: the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Rand Corporation, and I.B.M. The Census Bureau employee who showed him around says he was interested in a data retrieval system large enough to store information on twenty million people, which is generally considered the upper limit the Soviet Party has set for its membership. "I really don't remember him," he says. "He seemed your average dull apparatchik. He would not talk. But I remember that he kept asking questions." Now Chernenko's time to talk has come.

CHARLES FENYVESI

Charles Fenyvesi has written frequently on Soviet-bloc affairs for THE NEW REPUBLIC, *The Washington Post* and other publications.

Mondale's electoral-vote game plan.

ADDING THEM UP

WALTER MONDALE wants to make it clear for the record that he is not taking Iowa, New Hampshire, and Super Tuesday for granted, but it's also apparent from talking to him that he and his campaign aides have already begun thinking about what they will do to get ready for the general election contest against President Reagan. "The first thing is to unify the party, which is going to be easy," Mondale said in an interview just before the Iowa debate. "This looks like a bruising contest, but actually it's been one of the sweetest primaries in a long time. We'll get together, make certain everyone feels welcome, and focus our attention on beating Reagan.

"The second thing will be to prepare for the Democratic national convention and make it a solid and reassuring spectacle for the American people to watch," Mondale said. "We want to demonstrate that we've got our house in order. Americans look at a convention, and if it isn't well managed, they conclude you can't manage the country. It will require care and attention to the platform, the rules, the various constituent groups, the Vice Presidential selection process. The classic of what we don't want was 1980, and 1976 was a classic of the positive. Third, we have to raise enough money for a fair fight. The Presidential nominee gets a federal grant, but we need to raise money for the campaign at the state and local levels. The Republicans will have a ton and we can't match them, but we can raise several million, exactly how much I don't know. And the fourth thing, the most important thing, is the issues. That's what will determine whether we win or not."

The candidate indicated—as some of his aides have too—that he plans no shift to the center or to the right if and when he clinches the nomination. He appears to be satisfied with the themes he has been using in the pre-primary season—that a Mondale Presidency will make for a safer world, a more competitive America, and a fairer society. The negative side of these issues, of course, is that Reagan has made the world unsafe, that deficit-induced high-interest rates and an over-strong dollar have ruined the U.S. trade position and cost jobs, and that Reagan favors the rich. Mondale thinks that the themes are popular with the public right now, can unify the Democratic electorate, and can "generate an intensity that gets a tremendous turnout."

Turnout is a huge part of the Democratic strategy for 1984. In 1980, 53.9 percent of eligible voters turned out on election day. "If we can raise that to 57 or 58 percent, we ought to have a Democratic victory," said James Johnson, Mondale's campaign manager. Democrats hope to raise turnout from 87 million in 1980 to 100 million this year. They are especially counting on blacks and women. In 1980, 13 percent of the 7 million blacks who voted support-

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ed Reagan. The Democrats are hoping for a turnout of 10 million black voters in 1984, with next to none voting for Reagan. As one Mondale campaign official put it, "Ronald Reagan has made blacks the most serious voters in America. He has done negatively what years of Democratic voter registration drives have failed to do."

The power of new voters was demonstrated in Texas and New Mexico in 1982. In Texas, Republican Governor William Clements received 280,000 votes more than he polled when he was elected in 1978, but he was swamped by an increased Democratic turnout of 560,000. In New Mexico, increased registration and turnout, especially among Hispanics, elected a Democratic governor, senator, and congressman. In 1980 Reagan beat Jimmy Carter in Texas by 56 percent to 41 percent, and in New Mexico by 55 percent to 37 percent. Today Mondale's campaign officials think their man conceivably could carry both states. Some hint he will go after Texas, with its 29 electoral votes, by choosing Senator Lloyd Bentsen as his running mate, but he could also do so by nominating Senator Dale Bumpers of nearby Arkansas, a liberal more likely to energize the Democratic electorate.

Reagan pollster Richard Wirthlin told reporters a few weeks ago that the President was riding so high on the strength of the economic recovery that he was now leading Mondale in trial heats in forty-five of the fifty states. He hastened to add that he thought the race would end up very tight once the Democratic nominee was selected. Mondale supporters scoff at Wirthlin's findings as mere psychological warfare, and point to national polls showing that Reagan is barely leading Mondale.

THE MONDALE campaign is convinced, also on the basis of poll data, that Mondale will have virtually no "credibility threshold" to cross in running against Reagan, which is unusual for a challenger facing an incumbent. "Usually a challenger spends half his time trying to persuade people he's qualified to be President. Mondale won't have that problem," an aide said. This is the positive side of Mondale's having been Jimmy Carter's Vice President. "People know I was in there as one of the strategists," Mondale said. "They know I'm experienced, that I know what I'm doing." Mondale aides say that the Carter issue is further diminished by Reagan's reputation as an inattentive, part-time President. Mondale tries to make the most of that perception by telling audiences, "We need a President who knows what he's doing," especially in foreign policy.

Even though President Reagan reduced the Democrats to just 49 electoral votes in 1980, the Mondale camp thinks it can rely again on a base of about 165 electoral votes—about 100 in the Northeast (including 36 in New York and 25 in Pennsylvania), Michigan and Minnesota in the Midwest, one or more of the border states, plus Arkansas and Hawaii. Though the West is usually figured to be Reagan territory, the Mondale camp thinks that Washington and Oregon can be won, as can the normally Republican states of Iowa and Wisconsin in the Midwest. According to James Johnson, "these are all classic moderate or progressive Republican states, strong on women's issues and the environment." The four states account for 36 electoral votes.

Besides Texas and New Mexico, with 34 votes, the Mondale camp thinks it has an opportunity to carry at least some of the six states in the Deep South, with 59 electoral votes. The crucial factors will be black turnout and the economic situation facing blue-collar workers. In 1980 Reagan carried Alabama by 13,800 votes; Mississippi by 10,500; North Carolina by 38,000; and South Carolina by 7,400; and Carter carried his home state of Georgia.

If Mondale can carry his base of 165; add two of the four moderate Republican states for 18; carry Texas and win four southern states with 37 votes; he would be up to 249 electoral votes and within striking distance of victory. His task then would be to carry Illinois, with 24 electoral votes; or Ohio, with 23; or both New Jersey and Connecticut, with 24; or Florida, with 21; or—the longest shot—California, with 47. Theoretically, it can be done.

WHAT IT will take, though, is money and a very good campaign. The Democratic National Committee has very little to contribute in funds because of the failure of its two major money-raising events, the Memorial Day telethon and the Presidential candidates' tour in December. A major get-out-the-vote drive is being mounted, though, by the Association of Democratic State Chairs and the Democratic Governors Association, with funding that may exceed $5 million. The Republicans, meanwhile, are planning to spend $10 million on registration and turnout drives of their own. It remains to be seen which party will benefit most from the big push for voter participation.

It also remains to be seen who will profit most from Democratic efforts to complete the polarization of the electorate which Reagan has begun. Mondale aides say they will try to make this "a battle of the giants," a contest "between two men who disagree with each other about everything—from the role of government in the United States to the conduct of foreign policy." According to one Mondale aide, "this election is going to furnish a choice, not an echo. These are two men who can stand toe to toe, look each other in the eye and say, 'You're dead wrong about everything.' " The Mondale camp wants to run aggressively against Reagan and his record, to keep the President on the defensive, and to use his past policies—and the threat of a second Reagan term—to unify and expand the Democratic electorate. It may work. The danger is, though, that Reagan might occupy the center and paint the Democrats as a collection of self-seeking interest groups with a super-liberal at the head of the ticket. As one Democratic consultant said, "We might gain 13 million new voters and offend 70 million. We might score among blacks, Hispanics, and gender-gappers, but lose Ohio, Texas, Florida, and Illinois."

MORTON KONDRACKE

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Reaganomics is the President's weak spot.

RUNNING ON EMPTY

BY WILLIAM SCHNEIDER

FOUR YEARS AGO, economists at the Brookings Institution met every Thursday afternoon to buy and sell contracts in the Presidential futures market. As of February 21, 1980, Jimmy Carter futures were bringing the highest price, thirty-nine cents. George Bush futures were trading at twenty-seven cents, and Ronald Reagan futures at nine cents. So much for the smart money. Did the average American know any better? Apparently not. The February 1980 polls showed Carter leading Reagan by two to one. Carter's job rating at the time was 55 to 36 percent positive, a 19-point margin. After the 1980 New Hampshire primary, James Reston wrote, "Mr. Carter's strategy in the campaign, like the strategy of all successful candidates, is to command the middle ground of American politics." In fact, Jimmy Carter commanded the middle ground throughout the 1980 campaign. Polls showed that the voters placed Carter much closer to the center of the ideological spectrum than they did Reagan, who never succeeded in convincing anyone he was a moderate. By election day in November, Reagan was still seen as substantially to the right of the electorate. "The American people," Hamilton Jordan said, "are not going to elect a 70-year-old, right-wing, ex-movie actor to be President."

Reagan is about as sure a winner right now as Carter was four years ago. In other words, don't bet on it, especially if the Democrats really do what they keep saying they will do, and mobilize their party's natural populist base. Reagan's invincibility is not at all certain if you look carefully at the polls. ABC News and *The Washington Post* have gone right to the source to get predictions for 1984. "If an election between Reagan and Mondale were held today," they asked the public last month, "who do you think would win?" Sixty-six percent said Reagan would win; only 28 percent said Mondale. But when the same people were asked how they themselves would vote right now, the results were Reagan 48, Mondale 46.

Casey Stengel once said, "I never make predictions, especially about the future." Richard B. Wirthlin, President Reagan's pollster and a Stengelian, cautioned the Republican National Committee earlier this month that although his polls showed Reagan with a 16-point lead over Mondale, "These figures are about as stable as a feather in a windstorm." Put it this way: American voters don't like to quarrel with success. What Ronald Reagan has going for him right now is the fact that people think his program is working. Never mind what he is actually doing. The polls show widespread admiration for the President's performance even though most people don't agree with his policies. We have here the much-vaunted pragmatism of the American electorate. People support policies they don't particularly approve of as long as they seem to work.

Take Grenada. Polls show that the public was never convinced that Americans living on the island were in grave danger or that it was really necessary for the United States to intervene. And Americans are certainly not eager to take similar action in, say, Nicaragua, which President Reagan describes as a Marxist dictatorship that threatens this country's vital interests. Nevertheless, the Grenada intervention met with strong public approval. Why? Because it worked.

Compare Lebanon. The public understands the strategic importance of Lebanon and feels that our Marines have a "worthwhile mission" there. But they want them pulled out. Why? Because it is perfectly clear that their peacekeeping mission has been a failure, and there is widespread skepticism that it could ever succeed. The public opposes our intervention in Lebanon, not because it is wrong, but because it won't work.

The anomaly in the polls right now is that although Reagan gets a strong approval rating, his margin over Walter Mondale is, in most cases, uncomfortably slim. The approval rating measures feelings about the President's performance. The trial heats, however, measure support for Reaganism as well as feelings about Reagan—do you want four more years of this? In the latest CBS News/*New York Times* poll, for example, 27 percent of blacks express approval of Reagan's performance as President. No one in his right mind expects Ronald Reagan to carry 27 percent of the black vote this year.

The CBS/*Times* poll also shows a much stronger Reagan lead over Mondale than other polls do—16 points, as compared with 3 points in the ABC/*Post* and *Los Angeles Times* polls and a dead heat in the Gallup poll. The apparent reason for this discrepancy is that the CBS/*Times* poll asks the match-up between Reagan and Mondale at the beginning of the interview, whereas other polls pose the question later in the survey. People's immediate, instinctive response is to support the President. But if you force peo-

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ple to think through the issues, that support deteriorates.

The difference between performance and philosophy shows up very clearly when people are asked about the economy. The prevailing view of the economy is that we are in "a period of temporary improvement that won't really solve our economic problems over the long run." That assessment was endorsed by 42 percent in a recent *Los Angeles Times* poll, compared with 30 percent who thought we were in a period of "long-term growth that will lead to prosperity" and 24 percent who thought there was no recovery at all. The deficit more than anything else convinces people that Reaganomics is not a real fix for the economy. How can prosperity last, people wonder, if we are spending more money than we are taking in?

Those who see a temporary improvement are the critical swing group in the electorate. By margins of about two to one, they give Reagan a positive job rating and approve of his handling of the economy. But they don't want to cut spending on social services or increase spending on the military. And, by 54 to 32 percent, they feel that Reagan cares more about the rich than about everyone equally. In other words, they approve of the President's performance, but they dislike his policies. Most of these people are Democrats: 58 percent say they usually vote Democratic; 25 percent usually vote Republican. How are they voting right now? Mondale has the edge, 52 to 41 percent. This group's ambivalence about Reaganism is what makes the election so close in the polls, even though approval of the President's performance is high.

HOW CAN the Democrats hold on to these people? By reminding them of what they already believe: that Reaganism is wrong. That it is unfair. And that, in the long run, it won't work. In other words, quarrel with success. Make the economy the issue: not whether things are getting better or worse for the time being, but whether people share Reagan's vision of how he wants our society and our government to work. New York Governor Mario Cuomo puts the issue most eloquently when he talks about "the principle of family, mutuality, the sharing of benefits and burdens for the good of all, the recognition that at the heart of the matter, we are bound inextricably to one another." Cuomo recalls the Democratic programs that enabled millions of Americans to "go to college, own a home, live in the suburbs, imagine a better life for their children. All of this was government—good government."

The inclination of many Democrats right now is to run away from the economy, to concede the issue to Reagan. What they are forgetting is that economic populism is the Democratic Party's strength. It has held the party together for fifty years. It is the reason twice as many people call themselves Democrats as call themselves Republicans. It is also the reason Walter Mondale is doing as well as he is right now. He is the most authentic Democrat.

Mondale's problem is of course Jimmy Carter. The Republicans are making it clear that they intend to run against Carter. "The finger-pointers and hand-wringers of today," Reagan said in Chicago last month, "were the policymakers of yesterday, and they gave us economic stagnation and double-digit inflation." In a speech to the Washington Press Club, Republican Party Chairman Frank J. Fahrenkopf Jr. never mentioned Walter Mondale without mentioning Jimmy Carter. The Democrats, he said, are proposing "what sounds to me very much like the record and heritage of the last four years that the Democrats controlled the White House and Congress. Walter Mondale was part and parcel of that." We can expect to hear President Reagan ask regularly and repeatedly during the campaign, "My fellow Americans, do you really and truly want to reelect the Carter-Mondale Administration?"

How can the Democrats respond? They can cite Christopher Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* rule.

> *Friar Barnadine*: Thou has committed—
> *Barabas*: Fornication? But that was in another country; and besides, the wench is dead.

Then is then and now is now. Jimmy Carter is not running for reelection. Ronald Reagan is. And Reaganism is the issue.

Reaganism is economic elitism. It is the view that hunger in America is merely anecdotal, that the homeless are homeless by choice, and that only the morally unworthy have been hurt by the Administration's policies. In fact, Reaganism is pushing the Democratic Party together despite the best efforts of many Democrats to pull the party apart. The poll evidence is clear on this point. Reagan polarizes rich and poor, black and white, men and women, and Democrats and Republicans more than any other recent President.

The reason is economics. Opposition to Reagan is a function of economic vulnerability. Most blacks do not think Reagan is racially prejudiced. But they do know what his economic policies have done to them. As for the gender gap, antipathy to Reagan is strongest among single women. Single women, like blacks, have only recently begun to achieve a degree of economic independence in this country. Reagan threatens their security by threatening to take away the protection the federal government has traditionally offered to the economically vulnerable. Reaganomics is a class-divisive policy, and Reagan is a class-divisive President.

ONE OF THE more interesting sights in Washington these days is that of Democrats denouncing the deficit with all the zeal of born-again budget-balancers. House Speaker Tip O'Neill, that paragon of fiscal austerity, calls Reagan "the country's biggest budget-buster." Reagan certainly is vulnerable on the budget issue. He gets terrible ratings for his handling of the deficit. But do the Democrats have the credibility to use the issue against him?

Last month an NBC News pollster informed people that the "annual federal budget deficit is approximately ten times larger now than it was when Ronald Reagan became President." The poll then asked, "Do you blame Reagan

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for this growth in the federal budget deficit or not?" The answer was no, 55 to 36 percent. And what exactly will the Democrats do about the deficit? Increase taxes? People don't think that's such a good idea. It was rejected 70 to 24 percent in an ABC/*Post* poll and 73 to 21 percent in the Harris/*Business Week* poll. Cut defense spending? There's not a lot of support for that either. People in both polls were evenly split over the idea of reducing spending on the military.

THE REPUBLICANS still have an edge over the Democrats: although the margin is diminishing, they are still seen as the party better able to manage the federal budget. In this month's *Los Angeles Times* poll, Reagan was preferred over Mondale, 35 to 19 percent, as the candidate who would do the better job of handling the deficit. Forty-six percent saw no difference between them.

The more the Democrats talk about the deficit, the more they will be put on the spot to explain how they would do any better. Their explanation is not likely to sound very convincing, especially if they are talking at the same time about fairness to the poor. The Democratic Party is credible on the issue of economic equity. It is not very credible on the issue of financial management. Right now the deficit issue is splitting the Reagan Administration; the Democrats can hope the issue will split the entire Republican Party. But the more they make the deficit a partisan issue, the less likely that is to happen.

The key to a Democratic victory is the mobilization of the natural Democratic base. One way to do that is to expand the electorate through a massive voter registration drive. The fact that turnout went up in the 1982 midterm election for the first time in twenty years is an encouraging sign, and the increase was greatest among blue-collar workers and blacks. In 1980, 86.5 million Americans went to the polls. Reagan defeated Carter by a margin of 8.4 million votes. Ann Lewis, political director of the Democratic National Committee, thinks the Democrats will win this year if they can increase voter turnout to one hundred million. She expects the Democrats to reclaim 44 percent of John Anderson's 1980 total, or 2.5 million votes. She also expects to cancel Reagan's 1980 margin of 1.1 million votes among women. The remaining margin of 4.8 million is going to have to come from the hoped for 13.5 million new voters.

These include first-time voters, the currently unregistered, and previous abstainers. A little algebra reveals that the Democratic Presidential candidate will have to carry the new voters by about two to one in order to win. According to Lewis, that is exactly the prediction made by Republican pollster Lance Tarrance and conservative columnist Kevin Phillips. Her calculation also assumes that Reagan's vote will not go up among white males—a problematical assumption. The reason for Lewis's optimism is that turnout among Democratic voters was abnormally low in 1980. Polls show that 28 percent of those who had voted for Jimmy Carter in 1976 did not show up at the polls in 1980, even though they were still registered. By comparison, just 7 percent of the 1976 Ford voters abstained in 1980. If the Democrats can get the no-shows back in line this year, they will certainly cut into Reagan's margin. Stimulating that kind of turnout however, will take more than money and organization. It will take motivation. In order to tap the party's natural majority, Democrats must acknowledge that economic populism is the party's strength.

There are two polarities in American politics, one economic and the other cultural. The economic polarity relates to the role of government in the economy. In the nineteenth century, government was presumed to be the ally of economic privilege, and the "left"—Jeffersonians and Jacksonians—favored laissez-faire. In the twentieth century, the progressives and later the New Deal Democrats used state power to attack economic privilege. The less privileged began to look to government for support and for protection against adversity. Beginning in the 1930s, the Democratic Party, as the party of economic populism, reversed its basic orientation toward government. The system of class politics associated with the New Deal remains strong and has been revitalized by the economic downturn of the past ten years and by the policies of the Reagan Administration. It gave the Democrats great victories in 1974, 1976, and 1982.

The cultural polarity in American politics relates to the use of government to promote or enforce particular cultural values. In the nineteenth century, those were most often the values of Protestant revivalism—abolitionism, Sabbatarianism, prohibitionism—and they were deeply resented by Democrats, who saw themselves as the party of cultural laissez-faire. Cultural conflicts reemerged after World War II, and here again the parties reversed their historic positions.

BEGINNING IN THE 1960s, the Democrats became associated with the civil rights revolution and with liberal social, cultural, and foreign policy values. As a result, the Democratic Party lost many of its conservative adherents, including large numbers of white southerners. On the other hand, the Democrats gained the virtually unanimous loyalty of blacks, and began to pick up votes from liberal upper-middle-class suburbanites. The two important third-party candidacies of the past thirty-five years were those of George Wallace, the spokesman for culturally conservative southern Democrats who felt they no longer had a home in the Democratic Party; and John Anderson, the leader of liberal Republicans who felt equally displaced from a party led by Ronald Reagan.

The parties have moved in the direction of ideological consistency. The Republicans have become socially as well as economicaly conservative, and the Democrats have been veering toward social as well as economic liberalism. That sounds neat and rational, except for the fact that most voters are not ideologically consistent. The typical working-class voter seeks economic protection from the Democratic Party but does not trust its cultural liberalism. Middle-class suburbanites favor Reagan's fiscal conserva-

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tism but are repelled by the Moral Majoritarianism, anti-environmentalism, and foreign interventionism of the current Administration.

If the Democrats have learned anything over the past twenty years, it is that economic populism holds the party together, and cultural elitism tears it apart. Whenever Democrats fight about race or foreign policy, they lose. Thus for the Democrats to focus their campaign almost exclusively on the peace issue this year is a very big risk. True, Reagan is vulnerable on the peace issue, and the Democrats can use it against him. But Americans have another foreign policy value besides peace. They also want strength. The further the Democratic Party moves in a dovish direction, the more voters will begin to wonder whether it is offering a return to the perceived military weakness under Jimmy Carter.

During the roughly twenty years of bipartisan foreign policy consensus after World War II, both parties offered a two-track approach to foreign policy: cooperation (peace) and confrontation (strength). The inherent inconsistency of that approach came under attack during the 1960s from both the right and the left. The last great proponent of the two-track approach, Henry Kissinger, was reviled by both; but he retains considerable popularity with the American public. What the voters want is a President as committed to peace as Jimmy Carter and as committed to strength as Ronald Reagan. For the Democrats to talk incessantly about peace and arms control only invites Reagan to exploit the party's vulnerability on the strength issue. Events in the Caribbean last fall and in Lebanon right now demonstrate that Reagan as President has more control over the foreign policy agenda than the Democrats.

The populist advantage in American politics lies with the Democrats on economic issues and with the Republicans on social and foreign policy issues. The Republican Party has been trying since 1980 to dissolve the economic polarity in American politics, and with it, the Democrats' natural majority. Their obvious intention is to make Jimmy Carter the new Herbert Hoover. Equally obvious is the Republican effort to exploit cultural traditionalism for its populist appeal—to isolate Democrats as the party of blacks, feminists, radicals, and cultural elitists. They want to use moral conservatism to protect economic privilege.

The fact that Reaganomics seems to be working right now tempts many Democrats to jump on the bandwagon and say "me too" on the economy. If the Democrats surrender the economic issues, they will be fighting the election on Reagan's terms. Given that kind of choice, the voters will go for the real thing every time.

George McGovern and the uses of the past.

A Man Of The Party

By Sidney Blumenthal

WHEN GEORGE McGOVERN announced that he was running again for President, the derision was widespread. Even his wife said she hadn't encouraged him and wouldn't campaign for him. Because everyone knew he didn't stand a chance of winning, he was in danger of being tainted not only as a loser but as a fool: the Democratic Harold Stassen. In becoming a candidate for President in 1984, McGovern risked what was left of his dignity. Yet it is precisely his dignity that his campaign has enhanced.

McGovern's influence is greater than his poll numbers suggest. He evokes spontaneous warmth in many younger voters, for whom he is a nostalgic figure, part of the *Big Chill* syndrome. Certainly more people support him emotionally than electorally. He's been to the far side of failure, and even his direct pleas for votes seem relaxed. He's utterly serene and candid, making some of the other candidates look anxious and evasive by contrast. He doesn't have the desperate longing of someone who can't let go. "I don't feel that I personally have to be in charge of this country, that I personally have to be President," he told me. "Life will go on. I've never been more at peace with myself than I am right now. But I still feel strongly." McGovern appears freed from ordinary ambition. "It's quite incredible," said a top Mondale aide. "He's running as a sage."

His immediate goals are to present his ideas and to act as a party healer. He has a ten-point program that combines classic New Deal economics (Point Four: "Put unemployed Americans back to work *now*, cleaning up the environment and rebuilding the infrastructure of our country . . .") with a dovish foreign policy (the nuclear freeze, a 25 percent reduction in military spending, the end of U.S. military operations in Central America). He still believes in détente with the Soviet Union, and when he praised Richard Nixon in a lecture for his Soviet policy, the

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former President sent his former nemesis an autographed copy of his latest book. After an exchange of letters, they finally met. "I was trying to see if my perception about him was right," says McGovern. "Did he still believe in détente? And he does." It's the ultimate bipartisan coalition. But the shared view of the two men who once epitomized their parties is out of favor in Reagan's Washington. Ironically, McGovern's meeting with Nixon has been a highlight of his 1984 campaign, along with his spirited defense of civility in the New Hampshire debate and his peroration ("Don't throw away your conscience") in Iowa.

McGovern's manner, more than his policies, has commanded attention. He recalls all too well how cutting words spoken by Democrats during a primary can be used by Republicans in a general election. Thus, when John Glenn heatedly attacked Mondale in the New Hampshire debate, McGovern intervened. He assumed the role of party protector, reminding his colleagues that "front-runners sometimes get nominated." Later he told me: "We were delivering swords to Reagan that he would turn on Mondale." As the arbiter of campaign discourse, McGovern elevates himself above the fray. He becomes the elder statesman he wants the party to recognize. This is his unspoken goal in 1984: admittance into the pantheon of the Democratic Party, the party of Roosevelt, Stevenson, Kennedy, Humphrey—and McGovern.

His place in the party's history will mostly depend upon whether he offers it a usable past. Because he was the standard-bearer at the moment of maximum internal turmoil, he now represents continuity. He is a bridge between the older and new generations, a healer of contending factions. Most important, he has what all politicians need: the charisma of purpose. McGovern understands that values animate the party and that the party shelters the values. His contribution to the campaign, therefore, will be not his proposals but his perspective. Against Reaganism, McGovern poses a deeply rooted political philosophy—one that could give Mondale's message intensity and connect Gary Hart's with a tradition.

MCGOVERN IS a minister's son whose faith has been Progressivism, practiced first as a history professor and then as a politician. He still admires the works of Charles A. Beard and Vernon L. Parrington, quintessential Progressive historians. The Progressive historians, who were typically Midwesterners, tended to see American history as the unfolding progress of the democratic spirit in a perpetual contest with vested interests. They saw a pattern of fundamental dichotomies: Western rebels against Eastern bankers, working people against the privileged, progressives against reactionaries. By the 1950s, the Progressive historians were regarded as hopelessly old-fashioned, insufficiently ironical, and overly simplistic. Their central tenet, that America has been molded by great conflicts, was considered plain wrong by the new breed of historians, who argued that our history was always marked by an underlying "consensus." In the history profession as elsewhere, the "end of ideology" was proclaimed. George McGovern, in a sense, is the last Progressive historian.

He grew up in a strictly religious, and Republican, family. But by the time he arrived as a graduate student at Northwestern University, after a stint in World War II as a bomber pilot, he was a liberal, inspired by the "social gospel." His doctoral thesis was about violent miners' strikes in Colorado early in the century; his doctoral adviser was Arthur Link, Woodrow Wilson's biographer. In 1948, almost everyone in the Northwestern history department supported Henry Wallace of the Progressive Party for President. McGovern was a delegate to the Progressive Party convention, an association that was a significant cause of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s refusal to endorse his 1972 candidacy. But McGovern didn't vote for Wallace after all. At the Progressive convention he experienced what his biographer Robert Sam Anson called a "great disillusionment" over the "fanaticism" of Wallace's entourage, some of whom were Communists. Although McGovern continued to agree with many of Wallace's criticisms of cold war policy, the experience helped make him a staunch Democrat. In any case, his politics had its true source in South Dakota populism, with its unique mixture of self-reliance and cooperative banks.

IN THE early 1950s, there was virtually no Democratic Party in the state. McGovern took on the task of organizing it, leaving his teaching post at Dakota Wesleyan College to become the party's executive secretary. He recruited the entire party apparatus, from the precincts to the candidates. "I lived on the road literally for two-and-a-half years," he says. What he was doing was part of a larger transformation. Throughout the upper Midwest, in the post-New Deal era, the Democratic Party coalesced with populist groups—a fusion of values and party, power and purpose. The trick was to put the populist flame into the iron lantern of the Democratic Party without extinguishing it. In Minnesota, Hubert Humphrey was the founding father; in neighboring South Dakota, it was McGovern.

In 1960 McGovern lost a race for the U.S. Senate. The consolation prize was his appointment by President Kennedy as director of Food for Peace—a plum, especially for one who viewed the Midwest as the garden of the world. McGovern explained his new mission in the language of the cold war, and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. would call it "the greatest unseen weapon of Kennedy's Third World policy." But the program had ideological value because it fed millions; the propaganda was truthful.

In 1962, McGovern was at last elected to the Senate. He was an exemplary Democrat, standing tall with President Johnson in 1964 by voting for the Tonkin Gulf resolution, the justification for the escalation of the Vietnam War. A year later, McGovern publicly came out against the war; he was a dissenter, but never a party renegade. He maintained his close ties to the Kennedy faction, supporting Robert F. Kennedy when he ran for President in 1968. After Kennedy's assassination, McGovern announced for

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the Presidency himself in order to hold together the Kennedy forces at the cataclysmic Chicago convention. When Humphrey was nominated, McGovern, unlike many doves, did not stalk out. "No one," he says, "opposed the war more than I did, and no one reached the podium faster than I did to hold up Hubert's hand." He believed he was not compromising his principles but upholding the principle of loyalty. He didn't see how liberals would be served by Nixon's election. But Nixon beat Humphrey, and in 1972 he beat McGovern too.

The day after Nixon delivered his inaugural address, McGovern gave a foreboding speech at Oxford University on the state of the Democratic Party. He knew he had lost badly, but he worried about what would happen to the party if it lost its ideals. "The Democratic Party," he warned, "is in peril of becoming a party of incumbency out of power, much like the Whigs of the nineteenth century—a party with no principles, no programs, living only from day to day, caring only for the perquisites of office. . . . Without principles, there is no party."

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The party, in fact, was riven between factions whose titular heads were the past two losing nominees. Yet the issue that had precipitated the rupture, the Vietnam War, was receding. In 1974 Humphrey privately apologized to McGovern for the unkind things he had said about him in 1972. In the late summer of 1975, McGovern put a proposition to his old friend. "I thought the party was defeated in 1968 and 1972 because we were divided," he recalls. "We had a majority of voters. But Humphrey went down in 1968 because the doves sat on their hands. I went down to defeat partly because the Humphrey wing of the party sat on their hands. What I had in mind for 1976 was that Hubert would announce for President and also announce that I'd be his running mate. I thought it would bring the Democratic Party together. We'd beat any contenders and Gerald Ford." McGovern says that when he finished talking, he "noticed that Hubert had tears in his eyes. He was deeply moved." Humphrey wanted to think the idea over. About a month later, he told McGovern he couldn't do it. He didn't give a reason. "Possibly he was worried about his health," says McGovern. "I'll always think it was a good idea. It would have been duck soup."

The collapse of his scheme, McGovern is convinced, cleared the way for an interloper. The Humphrey and McGovern factions, represented in 1976 by Henry Jackson and Morris Udall, were both defeated by Jimmy Carter. McGovern regards Carter as "a mistake. In a way, he won by default. It was something that couldn't have happened at any other time." To McGovern, none of the main currents of the party coursed through Carter's politics. He was, according to McGovern, "the first neoliberal. He campaigned against the government. It was more or less an effort to marry old-fashioned Republicanism to the Democratic Party." Carter's record ended up giving credence to Reagan's assertion that government is inherently incompetent. His legacy within the party is the absence of a legacy.

The McGovern legacy, however, lives on, in spite of the neoconservative effort to read him out of the party. When the neoconservatives saw McGovern, they saw "acid, amnesty, and abortion"—a horde of student radicals, black militants, and feminist banshees who had kicked out labor and the faithful party regulars. They felt displaced, and in their search for order and stability they tried to paint McGovern as an outsider: a cultural radical, a purist, a party-wrecker. But McGovern never fit this image of "McGovernism." While they tried banishing him and his influence, most neoconservatives themselves wound up abandoning the party when Reagan was elected President. "People like [U.N. Ambassador] Jeane Kirkpatrick, someone working for a right-wing ideologue, who claims to be a lifelong Democrat—I never could understand that," says McGovern. "They've deserted the party. The neoconservatives were more interested in their own ideology than in the party. I haven't agreed with a lot of Democratic foreign policy, but I have never had any doubt about supporting

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the party. I'm not an outsider. What do you have to do to be considered a solid Democrat?"

In the Democratic pantheon, McGovern can't be put in the hall of losing Presidential candidates who set no directions for the party—Alton B. Parker, James M. Cox, and John W. Davis. He belongs in the same gallery as Stevenson, Humphrey, and William Jennings Bryan. The comparison with Bryan is particularly suggestive: old-stock midwestern Protestants, they both sounded the chords of Progressivism, echoing with scriptural references. Bryan, however, was the champion of the declining agrarian yeomanry, and McGovern has been the mentor of the new class of college-trained professionals. McGovern, then, is no throwback; he's an early modern who helped bring a new generation and a new class into politics. He lost, but millions of people who entered politics in his 1972 campaign are still active in the party—including, of course, his campaign manager, Gary Hart, and (McGovern claims) about a hundred more members of Congress.

Hart and the other new liberals, however, seem to be seeking a future without a past—a chrome future which, as a campaign theme, plays like electronic music: all metallic beeps, no deep harmonics. In the Iowa debate, Hart declared that we must "leave the past behind," perhaps the oldest "new idea" of all. (The greatest continuity in American thought is precisely the persistent faith in novelty.) In their wholesale condemnation of the past, the new liberals seem ready to cede all human experience to Reagan. McGovern is their political father, but they tend to deny any parentage. Only lately has Hart begun to acknowledge their relationship. (In the upper echelon of the Hart campaign, some campaign aides refer to McGovern as Obi-Wan Kenobe, the last Jedi knight, who vouchsafes to a younger man the secret of the Force needed to defeat the dark side. But is Gary Hart Luke Skywalker?)

Walter Mondale, for his part, doesn't seem to grasp the weight of the new politics constituency within the party, which probably accounts for at least a third of the primary vote. Mondale has carefully built a New Deal-like coalition at the organizational level without thinking much about the new politics people, who tend to be unorganized. He may win the primaries without the constituency McGovern fostered, but his neglect of it could lead to indifference in the fall. There's a dangerous precedent: Humphrey, Mondale's mentor, lost partly because of its abstention. Now this group is numerically larger, more established, and nearly as volatile. Lack of enthusiasm for Mondale is most apparent here. If these voters are apathetic in November, they may stay home, or, worse, vote for John Anderson.

Mondale offers a paradoxical unity, for he doesn't account for any of the schisms in recent Democratic history. The only discontinuities to him are Republican Presidencies. He's the party insider who wants all conflicts settled on the inside. In this he is outside the Progressive creed, which considers economic and political conflict to be a universal fact and the motive force of progress. McGovern views the party as the appropriate channel for conflict, whereas Mondale sees it as the expression of consensus. The difference is crucial. Mondale's instinctive avoidance of antagonism may account for why he sometimes hesitates so long before clearly taking sides on controversial issues. "Fritz never bled over the Vietnam issue," says McGovern. "It did not tear at his soul. I don't quite know why. The issue was divisive, disrupting the fabric of the Democratic Party. I don't think he likes controversy, to do battle over a moral issue that disrupts the peace of his own party." He pauses, and adds: "Fritz is a good decent man with liberal instincts. I'd certainly do everything I could to get him elected if he's nominated."

MCGOVERN doesn't have the iron lantern of the party anymore, but he can light a flame. Mondale, meanwhile, is marching victoriously across the country holding a cold lantern. In the Iowa debate, the frontrunner attacked Reagan as a "radical," but in so doing only underscored the President's strength of conviction. The name-calling confronts Reagan without engaging his ideology. In a corollary criticism, Mondale has been chiding Reagan for his "management style." By echoing the characteristically Republican notion that government should be run like a business, Mondale inadvertently casts Reagan as the populist, the expansive visionary. "Reagan intimidates some of the candidates," observes McGovern.

More than any Democrat, Ronald Reagan rallies behind himself the inspirational Progressive themes, arousing enormous moral and political energy. It is partly the tincture of Progressivism that distinguishes Reaganism from traditional Republicanism and gives it a broader appeal. Reagan's utopia, like Bryan's, is in some golden age of the past. The old populists defended a society passing away under the onslaught of industrialism; Reagan wants to restore that society, which he believes has been undermined by big government. He uses Progressive rhetoric against Progressive values, projecting a dramatic struggle of the people against the Establishment. Only in his version the special interests are the many and the oppressed are the few. He expropriates the liberals' symbolic heritage, without any of them explicitly calling him to account.

Except George McGovern. "The populist and Progressive traditions have so much insight into our contemporary problems," he says. "Reaganism is an appeal to selfishness, a direct antithesis to social justice, the Judeo-Christian ethic to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless. There are two competing feelings in each of us. Each of us is grasping and greedy. Reagan appeals to that. The Democratic Party has to stand foursquare for a more humane tradition. You don't separate yourself from history."

Controlling the image of the past has immediate practical consequences, as Reagan has proved. He sets the thematic stage for the liberals, just as Carter did for the conservatives. In what promises to be the most ideological Presidential campaign since 1964 and the most class conscious since 1948, the Progressive interpretation of history may not be so anachronistic after all. Come home, America.

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The missiles went in. And the sky did not fall.

POST-PERSHING GERMANY

BY WALTER LAQUEUR

Augsburg, West Germany

THIS CITY on the river Lech is not an ideal vantage point for watching the great international crises. Elsewhere people may get excited about the latest scandal in Bonn or the latest speech by President Reagan; not here. And yet as a seismograph measuring the underground crosscurrents likely to shape the future of this country, Augsburg is probably more reliable than Bonn or Hamburg or nearby Munich. It is not a sleepy city; the business of Augsburg is business, and there is culture too. It has a quarter-million people, an opera, two theaters, a light opera, a ballet, a university, and the fifth largest newspaper in the country (Heinrich Heine was its Paris correspondent). Its sister cities are Dayton, Ohio, and Inverness, Scotland—excellent places no doubt, but not in quite the same league as far as cultural life is concerned.

It is a mere thirty-five minutes by rail from Munich. But the big demonstrations, the strikes, the street battles have passed it by: Augsburg seldom makes the headlines. And yet cities like this are becoming increasingly important. All of the country's big cities are losing people, but most of the medium-sized towns are growing. A conservative city, then? Yes and no. A Social Democrat has served as mayor for many years, and the new industries in this city (as in southern Germany in general) are anything but backward. Augsburg has a tradition of innovation: the diesel engine was invented here, and the first German railway ran from here to Munich. True, M.A.N., the biggest company in town, which produces trucks known all over the world, faces serious trouble. But the industrial scene is dominated by many medium-sized enterprises which are doing quite well specializing in various branches of engineering, electronics, and high technology. Their main weakness is that of German industry in general: lack of capital. To a large extent they are all owned by the banks.

There has been a significant shift from North to South in the German economy, and it will have important political consequences. Twenty-five years ago, the Ruhr and the Rhineland produced much of the German G.N.P. and most of the exports. But with the decline of the traditional industries such as coal, steel, textiles, and shipbuilding, the Ruhr has become Germany's major problem region. Even Hamburg faces difficulties. Southern Germany, meanwhile, has attracted many of the new industries and continues to prosper.

Some blame the Social Democratic governments of northern Germany, saying they have created an antibusiness climate, in contrast to the conservative South, with its laissez-faire disposition. But this is less than fair. The Social Democrats have tried to support the ailing industries. It simply hasn't worked. Northern Germany was always dominated by a relatively few big corporations, rather rigid in outlook, moving slowly, not adjusting themselves to change. The medium-sized enterprises have been more innovative and adaptable, more willing to accept risks. But this does not explain why the South German car industry (Mercedes Benz, Audi, BMW) should prosper and the North German should not. Some have attributed the growing progress of South Germany to greater motivation—the traditional pietist attitude toward labor and money on the part of the Swabians. But the Bavarians never were Pietists, and they have been doing well, too.

To some extent, these developments result from things over which the Germans have no control, such as the situation of world markets. Germany depends on exports more than any other major country in the world, including Japan. This dependence will be a source of great vulnerability in the years to come. Another weakness is the declining birthrate. The problems of structural unemployment will be easier to solve in the year 2000; but the domestic market will shrink, and the *Bundeswehr* will not get enough recruits. Also affected will be the homogenous character of the country: one out of three or four children born in the major cities will not be of German origin. Nearly everyone seems to be full of good will: teachers, priests, and social workers denounce the systematic exploitation of ethnic tensions by the extremist right. But there still will be troubles on this front.

In the past Augsburg was an independent imperial city, and there continues to be a sense of civic involvement uncommon in the anonymity of bigger cities. But where do initiatives originate? Who is actually running the city? Once upon a time the *Stammtische*—leading citizens meeting regularly over a glass of beer in a public bar—were very influential. But people no longer live within walking distance, and they have less time to spare in the evening. The voluntary associations still carry great weight as far as municipal affairs are concerned: the rifle clubs, the voluntary fire brigades, the bowling groups, the pigeon breed-

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ers, and, on a higher social scale, the Rotarians and Kiwanians. They have the votes, and the mayor listens when they send their deputations. What are the main problems? Traffic congestion inside the town, rail and road connections, the growing indebtedness of the municipalities. These are worldwide problems, but the thrifty burghers of Augsburg find it especially galling to live with them.

AUGSBURG ON a snowy winter morning. More than half of the city was destroyed in major air raids in 1944. But the narrow lanes of the old city are largely intact, or were rebuilt in the old tradition. Augsburg still seems to consist of face-to-face communities. Fifteen years ago, German intellectuals found the philistinism of this kind of town repulsive. One of them actually wrote about the idiocy of life in Augsburg. Now the pendulum is swinging back. It has been discovered that housing here is considerably cheaper, that one is closer to nature, that the schools are frequently better, that culture is taken more seriously than in the blasé big cities. People greet each other in the street and even stop to talk. In brief, the advantages of backwardness have been rediscovered.

Augsburg at night, near the city wall. It was here during the First World War that Bertolt Brecht led a small group of like-minded very young men and women on a nightly procession with a torch or Chinese lantern, playing his guitar, singing what were considered outrageous songs. Brecht was born a few steps from here, in Auf dem Rain 7. The building still stands. There is a Bertolt Brecht street in town, though it is not one of the leading thoroughfares. Augsburg has not yet quite come to terms with its famous native son, just as Luebeck never felt comfortable with Thomas Mann. People in Augsburg failed to recognize his great talent; this Eulenspiegel did not fit into the local tradition. He was personally insufferable, and politically a curious mixture of deviousness and naiveté. Today he is treated with the deference due a master. The collected works are edited, some plays are performed; but this has more to do with the decline in the quality of German plays in the 1960s and 1970s. In the end, through no fault of his own, even his poems may no longer be remembered. As I discovered in interviews, it is one of the consequences of recent German educational reforms that high school students know a great deal of semiotics, but no longer know any poems by heart. Brecht would not have approved.

Conversation with a leading local bookseller. What do people read these days? Umberto Eco and Le Carré head the list of best sellers. Irrationalism is in: death and eschatology. There is a flood of books on how to live with fear and how to overcome anxiety. The *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* of Munich has just published in installments the story of a young mother who suffers from depression. The same week, *Der Stern* (the illustrated weekly that acquired fame in the Hitler diaries hoax), published a learned treatise about the physiology of fear: how it dominates our life, how it proceeds from the *corpora mamillaria* to the thalamus. Millions of readers are told all there is to the function of seratonin and dopamine. There is far more talk about all-pervasive fear and intolerable stress in North Germany than in the South. Even though Germany is now a smaller country than before the Second World War, the differences in outlook and mood are substantial, at least as great as in the past. Years ago someone once told me a foolproof opening for joining any cocktail-party conversation: "But it is different in the South. . . . " It certainly applies to contemporary Germany.

There is a plaque on the building next to my hotel which says that Luther met Cardinal Cajetan at this site in 1518. The meeting was a total failure; it was Luther's last direct contact with Rome. This did not, however, prevent the signing twelve years later of the Augsburg Confession, which kept peace between Catholics and Protestants over much of Europe for almost a century after. Today, a leading local cleric told me, relations between the two confessions are better than ever before. It seems strange that such a rapprochement should take place at the very time when people in this country show so much concern about the decline in political culture, the polarization of public life, and so on. Or could it mean, perhaps, that ecumenical relations have improved precisely because religion has become irrelevant for so many people?

The latest polls show that only 2 percent of young Protestants attend church. Germany, along with Britain, now has the lowest church attendance in Europe. The state of affairs among the local Catholics is better. Virtually everyone is baptized and given a religious burial, and the number of religious wedding ceremonies is also growing (though not only for religious reasons, my interlocutor tells me; it seems to be connected with the nostalgia wave). But even among Catholics in Augsburg, church attendance is no higher than 20 to 25 percent, and lower yet among the young generation.

SOME LEADING Protestants think they have found a way to make the church more relevant again. They see the answer in much greater social and political commitment, and some of them have gone very far indeed in this direction. The German peace movement would never have achieved its breakthrough among the middle class without the respectability bestowed on it by the Protestant church. German Catholics do not dismiss the importance of such involvement, but they see more clearly the pitfalls involved. It is one thing to preach liberation theology in a Latin American dictatorship, quite another to propagate it in a democratic country in the heart of Europe.

Radical Protestant leaders such as the theologian Dorothea Soelle and Pastor Heinrich Albertz, former deputy mayor of Berlin, think of their country as militaristic, a giant concentration camp, a place where the rule of terror is perpetuated. These are gross exaggerations. But even if they were true, there would be nothing specifically Protestant in this message. The Trotskyites and Communists have been saying such things all along, though the more enlightened among them have taken care not to use apocalyptic language. In the new gospel of these radical theolo-

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gians, there is no obvious need for God. As Bible classes give way to agitprop, the differences between religious and nonreligious militants grow invisible to the naked eye. The radical theologians are losing the young generation to political sectarians on the one hand and to all kinds of outlandish religious sects on the other, for these cater more effectively to young people in need of a spiritual message.

Church participation in extreme politics is hardly unprecedented. In the 1930s, Hewlett Johnson, the "Red Dean" of Canterbury, thought that Stalinism was the most Christian political system on earth, and the "German Christians" thought the same of Adolf Hitler. They had a right to say what they believed was the truth. But they were speaking in their capacity as church dignitaries, not as citizens. It was an act of dubious morality.

The Catholics, unlike the Protestants, have had doubts about the constant invocation of *Dies Irae*, the day of wrath. Luther believed that by frightening his audiences, he would attract them more easily to his doctrine. But he also genuinely believed that the end of the world was near, telling his friends to be prepared for Judgment Day. He even made specific predictions, ranging from six months to one hundred years. Such threats were quite effective for a while. But as one fateful date passed after another, doubts began to arise among the people. Where was the Day of the Lord? The preachers of fear reacted angrily, but ultimately they accepted that the mere repetition of threats resulted in diminishing psychological returns.

ETCHING AND ENGRAVING OF AUGSBURG, 1821
THE GRANGER COLLECTION

In the nineteenth century, Protestant theologians dropped eschatology altogether. But then, quite significantly, some of them rediscovered it in the 1960s: God was about to break the world order. There was an obvious connection with the *Zeitgeist*: contemporary ideas were projected back. Catholicism, on the other hand, has preferred to play down the apocalyptic angle, invoking the authority of the New Testament (Mark 13:32): "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not even the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." The Eastern churches have rejected speculation about the Day of Judgment even more emphatically. All this is of some political relevance. It helps to explain the "great fear" in Protestant Central and Northern Europe, and the absence of a similar fear in the Catholic countries and in Eastern Europe.

But German Catholicism also has its problems. In Augsburg, a great deal of indignation was voiced about *Song Book 2* of the Catholic youth organization. Someone took the trouble to engage in quantitative analysis, and discovered to his (or her) horror that about a quarter of the songs were not of the *Te deum, laudamus* variety, but actually ridiculed churchmen or, at the very least, called on the young vanguard of the proletariat to carry the red banner all over the globe. *Song Book 2* was withdrawn after a few days. Some argued that few people pay much attention to the words they are singing, so the text does not matter, although the preface of the *Song Book* says that "We hope that the singers will do in practice much of what they are singing. . . ."

Somehow I obtained a copy, and immediately encountered an old acquaintance: *"Brueder zur Sonne zur Freiheit"* ("Brothers, Upward to Light and Freedom") which was represented as an "old German folk song." It is a stirring song, but is neither German nor a folk song. It originated in Russia. The man who composed it and wrote the text on the eve of the great strike of the Moscow Railway Workers in 1896, Leonid Radin, was a strange scientific genius and friend of Lenin. It has been adopted by many different parties since the turn of the century. It was brought to Germany in the 1920s by Hermann Scherchen, a conductor and one of the precursors of atonal music, who had spent World War I as a prisoner in Russia. Then it became one of the favorite songs of the (unpolitical) German youth movement. But the left also sang it, and when the Nazis came to power, they immediately seized it, complete with "breaking the yoke of tyranny" and the "last battle." There was only one small

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change in the last stanza: not the red flag but the swastika was to be hoisted over the new workers' state. (The Nazis also provided some twenty alternative texts for this tune, but none proved to be as popular as the original.)

The Third Reich came and went; the song proved more durable. After the war, it was adopted by the early peace movement, the unions, and subsequently by many others. In today's *Song Book*, no reference is made to its fate between 1933 and 1945. It has become a folk song, just as under the Nazis the author of the *Lorelei* was an unknown poet. How to explain that a political song invoking liberation, revolution, the victory of the forces of light over darkness and evil, could be sung with equal enthusiasm by people on opposite sides of the barricades—the extreme left and the far right, Catholics, Protestants and Jews, pacifists, Communists, Socialists, Nazis—and unpolitical people? Does it mean that the fighting spirit, the solidarity, the dreams of freedom, the longing for the *lutte finale* are politically indifferent—a matter, finally, of aesthetic taste? Perhaps there is no such thing as a revolutionary song, or a reactionary one. I do not profess to know the answer.

ANTI-AMERICANISM. There are two U.S. brigades stationed in or near Augsburg, but the twenty thousand Americans are not in evidence. The subject never came up in conversation. I recalled their presence only toward the end of my stay. The mayor thought hard when I inquired about problems and tensions. He could not think of any, except for occasional damage caused by heavy vehicles on maneuvers. Charles Rogers, a black general who at one time was local commander, has become something of a legend. He married a local girl, wore Bavarian leather trousers, and spoke perfect German. He had been liked by everyone, and those who succeeded him had tried equally hard to speak German, and to be on good terms with local authorities and the population. The mayor told me that he had many problems, but the American military presence is not among them.

The Augsburg experience, some may argue, seems too good to be true, or, at any rate, not typical. What of the attacks against U.S. soldiers and military installations by terrorist groups? What about the dramatic decline in confidence in U.S. leadership, as shown in public opinion polls during the last year? What of anti-Americanism in general? There have been a few terrorist attacks by far right groups, but none of late. The German security forces seem to be in control. Neo-Nazism is no more of an issue in West Germany than in other European countries. Support for U.S. policies has substantially dropped over the last year. But the results of the polls are contradictory, and have to be interpreted in a historical context. Fifty-six percent of those asked in 1956 said they would welcome an American troop withdrawal from Europe. That number fell to an all-time low in 1979, but has risen again in the more recent past.

Some Germans now recall with some nostalgia the golden days of the Kennedy Presidency and the closer relations between the two nations prevailing at the time. Kennedy was warmly applauded after his famous "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" speech, and he was genuinely popular in Germany. The current issue of *Die Zeit*, a leading elite weekly, features a picture showing him among an enormous throng of German admirers—and, in juxtaposition, a demonstration mocking Reagan. But memories are fallible. Who remembers that the polls under Kennedy showed that 42 percent of the Germans wanted neutrality for their country, compared with 40 percent who favored staying in the Atlantic partnership? According to the polls, the United States is still considered West Germany's best friend by a wide margin. Support is higher now than in the 1950s, and pro-American feeling is somewhat stronger here than in other European countries. Such figures refer to basic attitudes; on specific strategies there is considerable disagreement. At this point, German views, especially among the young generation, become contradictory. According to the polls, most Germans believe the Soviet Union is getting militarily stronger all the time, whereas the Americans are not. They also believe there is no need to do anything about it.

There is anti-Americanism among intellectuals, the demand for "cultural decolonization" has been voiced, and the editor of *Der Spiegel*, the leading newsmagazine, recently complained that "nothing can be done as long as Germany is an occupied country." After World War II, for most Germans, America was the promised land and it could do no wrong. The strong anti-Americanism of the extreme left (and also of the far right) of the late 1960s came as a reaction to the excessive admiration of all things American. It was an obvious case of lost illusions. It had dawned on people that the father figure was neither all-powerful nor always right. This new, disparaging mood was reflected in the novels, movies, and television shows of the late 1970s. In the last year alone there have been half a dozen books on the United States, many of them quite critical in character. Few Americans are aware of these writings, and those who are will hardly protest. In Germany, on the other hand, there is great sensitivity vis-à-vis occasional critical reports on Germany by American reporters and commentators, and this has caused considerable annoyance.

RUDOLF BAHRO, one of the gurus of the left, has compared the intrusion of the Western (American) lifestyle on Germany to the impact of the Spanish *conquistadores* on the Incas. Werner Herzog, who happens to be Yugoslav by origin, and Hermann Piwitt, the editor of *Konkret*, the radical-chic illustrated monthly, have called for cultural decolonization. "The Yankee language," Piwitt writes, "with 'fighting' and 'dope,' with 'power' and 'message,' corrupts and dominates the Germans even while they resist it." In the words of Hennig Eichberg, a leading "national revolutionary," "Germany is occupied not only by tanks and Pershing missiles. . . . The neon lights in my suburb proclaim 'sportswear,' 'steak corner,' and 'book center' (all in

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English). The language of youth music broadcast from most radio stations is the same that is spoken in the German headquarters of the multinationals. The master language is the language of the masters. Language is political program. . . ."

There is a journal called *Englisch-Amerikanische Studien*, used by English teachers in West Germany, which helps to ensure that schoolchildren will have no illusions about America. The table of contents includes such chapters as "On the Ash Heap of History: Ronald Reagan's Crusade Against the Soviet Union, An Analysis of Reagan's Programmatic Speeches," "The C.I.A. in Grenada: Documentation and Analysis," etc. It is unlikely that even North Korean children are taught the English language on the basis of Reagan's speeches and C.I.A. documents, but then, West German progressives are not known for their moderation.

Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr called some younger comrades to order the other day: it was arrogant and stupid to argue that Americans had no culture, nor should one forget what the Americans did for Germany during the war and after, and that even now Germany was largely dependent on American support. Even from within the far left, anti-Americanism has been attacked as a "socialism of fools." For in the final analysis, such moods owe more to Gaullism than to Marx and Engels. There is a tradition in German intellectual history, too, of feelings of superiority to Western civilization and modernism; such *Kulturkritik* may appear in an antibourgeois guise, but it is still predominantly right wing in inspiration.

DESPITE THE lamentations of some intellectuals, American cultural fashions still exercise an enormous fascination in Germany. There is no interest in Soviet books or movies, which, for a variety of reasons, is a pity. Mass culture is almost totally dominated by the "Anglo-Saxons." Irene Cara was the top female star of 1983, and among the male performers Rod Stewart, Paul Young, Michael Jackson, David Bowie, and their like monopolize the field.

Anti-American moods do exist. They manifest themselves in a mixture of pity and contempt for the bumbling, uncouth giant. The fact that Western Europe still depends for its defense on the United States provides additional fuel. No one likes to be dependent, and the protector becomes an obvious target for the resentment generated by dependence. But none of this really goes very deep, and it would be wrong to overdramatize the state of affairs and to apply to Germany special exacting standards. Compared to other European countries, not only Britain and France but also Scandinavia and Benelux, there is relatively little anti-Americanism in Germany. Compared to the leaders of the Labour Party or Mr. Enoch Powell in Britain, the German Social Democrats are almost uncritical admirers of the American way of life. Unlike the British Liberals, Germany's liberal party, the Free Democrats, does not reject NATO. As for Ms. Petra Kelly, Messrs. Bahro and Günter Grass, and similar critics of America in Germany, one frequently wishes that they would get together with their British, Scandinavian, and other friends, and decide to *do* something about greater European and German independence instead of merely extolling the virtues of European (and German) Gaullism in their speeches and articles. Alliances come into being only when facing a common danger. Perhaps America, the new menace, could act as a catalyst for a fresh impetus to European unity? For such an initiative, alas, we shall have to wait a long time. The critics of America are in no hurry to break the shackles of their dependence.

THE HOT autumn has come and gone. The main discontent since has been the absence of snow and the fact that skiing has been possible only fairly high up in the mountains. No major changes can be detected in Germany despite all the dire forecasts. The domestic consensus on defense has largely broken down, but this was bound to happen anyway once the Social Democrats went into opposition. The Greens, as predicted some time ago in these pages ("German Autumn," TNR, October 17), will not last much longer as a party. Some are being drawn into the very parliamentary process they once despised; others will retreat into extra-parliamentary forms of protest. Chancellor Kohl is critized for indecision. The Social Democrats admit with admirable candor that they are as baffled as the rest as to how to cope in the long run with problems such as structural unemployment and the high cost of the welfare state. These are, of course, by no means solely German issues.

In years past there was a tendency in the United States to exaggerate the stability of West Germany. Now there is an inclination to overrate the severity of its problems and to underrate its ability to cope with them. Within a short time the most loyal and strongest ally has become the sick man of Europe. The image was wrong ten years ago and it is distorted now. The frequent use of apocalyptic terms by German theologians, writers, and some of the media is just another way of saying that they are facing certain difficulties in their domestic, economic, and foreign policy. The shrillness and the anxieties voiced are not to be taken quite literally; they are not manifestations of some deep existential, paralyzing *mysterium tremendum* such as affected medieval man. It is no more than an expression of discontent, and even this is limited to certain sections of the population.

Democratic West Germany has come of age; there is no longer room for an overprotective attitude on our part. There is still the old German weakness of exaggeration and overreaction—in peace and in war, in politics, economics, and cultural life—the craving for order in an essentially chaotic world, the belief that the only alternative to perfection is utter failure and disaster, the assumption that the only alternative to the jackboot is to walk barefooted. But with all these weaknesses, it is also true that common sense has made remarkable strides in Germany, more perhaps than ever before in its history. The Germans may need it in the years to come.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Youth and Other Follies

Last week the third film by a gifted filmmaker, Diane Kurys. This week the first film by a gifted filmmaker, Bill Forsyth, whose second and third we've already seen.

Forsyth's first appearance here was with his second film, *Gregory's Girl* (TNR, June 23, 1982), a nubbly bit of homespun about Scottish Lowlands adolescents, with the glow of intimacy and affection. His next, *Local Hero* (TNR, March 21, 1983) was more luxuriously made: David Puttnam, the producer of *Chariots of Fire*, was behind it. Its narrative was clever rather than revelatory, still there was charm in its Scottish fishing village. Now we get Forsyth's first, *That Sinking Feeling*. It's the least smooth of the three, naturally, but a picture that shows where a man of talent and good feeling came from. (He's now so successful that we're enjoined to call his film *Bill Forsyth's That Sinking Feeling*. Fooey.)

That Sinking Feeling
(Samuel Goldwyn)

This first picture was made in 1979, was shot in 16mm on that ubiquitous shoestring, and used members of the Glasgow Youth Theater. (Some of the cast were later in Forsyth's second film, including Gordon John Sinclair, Gregory himself.) Forsyth, who is now 38, had graduated from the British National Film School in 1970 and had been working at various film jobs for five years even before that schooling. After graduation, he formed his own outfit in Glasgow and made three or four short films a year. Then he got the backing for this first feature.

In a way, what's best about *That Sinking Feeling* is the fact that it doesn't reflect all his film education and experience. Partly, of course, this is because he didn't have enough money to do everything he knew how to do. But the shortage was a disguised blessing because it gives the picture a comradely feeling, like a home movie made with friends by one of them who has some equipment, knows the craft, and gets fun from both film and his fellows, the teenage Glaswegians of whom he had recently been one. I've seen a number of American student films through the years that were more polished than *That Sinking Feeling*, but few of them had this vicarial sense—that it was made by the one of the group who was a filmmaker.

It's a slight piece of work, and ought to be. It's about a robbery planned and executed by some bored and frustrated adolescents. (Or are the adjectives superfluous?) They think they can get money to help them with their boredom and frustration through a heist of stainless steel sinks from a warehouse. They manage to get away with a van load, but the only money they realize comes from an art dealer. One of the youths hopes to sell five or six of the sinks to a gallery owner; a dealer comes in and sees the pile in the middle of the gallery floor and buys them as sculpture. That's the total, as one of them says, of their "ill-gotten drains."

It would be ponderous to view this as a story of juvenile crime. It's a juvenile crime fantasy, a comedy acted out by the fantasists and filmed by someone who isn't long past that kind of fantasizing himself. The film's chief residual interest is that it fills a gap in our knowledge of a man on his way to being a considerable regional filmmaker. (Forsyth has already finished his fourth film, also set in Glasgow.) Still, on a bleak winter night you could get some warmth from this agreeable eighty-two-minute hand-knitted film.

Department of Outraged Virtue. I. B. Singer tells us in a self-interview (*The New York Times*, January 29, 1984) that he has seen the Streisand film made from his story, "Yentl the Yeshiva Boy," and that he doesn't like it. What a surprise. He tells us himself that his story "was in no way material for a musical." Would he also tell us the name of the person who put a gun to his head and, despite his foreboding, forced him to sell the story to Streisand?

Singer now joins a club I wish he had stayed out of, the authors who take the money and do not run, who stay to complain about what Hollywood did to their work. Other members include William Styron, E. L. Doctorow, and Judith Rossner, all of whom told a literary luncheon last November how their writings had suffered in film transformation. None of them said anything—at least as reported—about who forced them to sell their film rights or about asking that their names be removed from the desecrating films.

It's such a stale ploy. These writers, and dozens before them, have known quite well what Hollywood would almost certainly do to their work. (Doctorow himself wrote the screenplay of *Daniel* and served as executive producer.) They want the money; and, after they get it, they want to play up to literary luncheons as ravished virgins. Possibly it takes their mewlings too seriously to point out that films of novels are not necessarily desecrations: Pudovkin's *Mother*, Ford's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Rohmer's *The Marquise of O . . .*, for a few examples. (The first two are improvements over their originals.) But

FILMS WORTH SEEING

And the Ship Sails On. Fellini's best since *Amarcord*, a patently symbolic voyage in 1914 on a luxury liner carrying European glories and follies. Exquisitely done. (Reviewed 2/13/84)

Dear Maestro. Two orchestral conductors, 40, friends, are turned into rivals and discover themselves. An Italian first film, fine. (2/6/84)

Entre Nous. One can quarrel (I do) with a central selfish action, but Diane Kurys's account of her mother and father and mother's woman friend is treated with fingertip delicacy. (2/27/84)

Gorky Park. Moscow and murder. And more murders. Competently directed and acted, except for the hero, this thriller thrills. (2/6/84)

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the real point is not that film automatically despoils but that these writers play the straight money game and then complain because the purchasers play it too.

How differently some writers look at the relationship between literature and film. Last November 18, about the same time that the bruised millionaires were carrying on at the New York literary luncheon, the (London) *Times Literary Supplement* featured a symposium on "Writers and the Cinema." Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, admitting that her long-term partnership with the director James Ivory and the producer Ismail Merchant protected her from what she calls "the real world of films," nonetheless said about screenwriting:

> It has been a two-way traffic for me—what I have learned in films I have put back into my books, and what I have learned about . . . writing fiction I've put to use in my films. I've needed both to keep going—I mean imaginatively as well as financially.

Malcolm Bradbury compares the emergence of film in this century with that of the novel in the eighteenth century:

> The novel, like film, emerged as a "low" form, and its very codes and systems were thought vulgar. Yet increasingly they penetrated into literary activity, shaping all the forms of writing. Much the same has been true of the impact of film on twentieth-century fiction; many of the devices and coding systems that we identify as radical and experimental in the modern novel therefore have an implicit film source.

This is not precisely the same subject that the Americans were anguishing about. (Among the latter, only Doctorow said a word about the formal influence of film on fiction.) And the *TLS* contributors did not disavow the conflict between most film writing and serious writing. But at least the symposium added something to the much-chewed topic of fiction-and-film, and at least it was free of that tedious hypocrisy by well-paid hustlers of film rights pretending to be victims of rape.

The use and abuse of 'excellence.'

TOWARD AN OPEN CULTURE

BY IRVING HOWE

IN 1896 William Dean Howells published an essay, "New York Low-Life in Fiction," dealing with Stephen Crane's *Maggie* and Abraham Cahan's *Yekl*. He praised, no doubt overpraised, these fictions as instances of a new urban realism that "have drawn aside the thick veil of ignorance which parts the comfortable few from the uncomfortable many of this city." He was sympathetic to the efforts of Crane and Cahan to render New York's street language, even wondering whether "we shall have a New York jargon which shall be to English what the native Yiddish of [Cahan's] characters is to Hebrew"—a remark which, if repeated today, would evoke cries of dismay from our guardians of linguistic purity.

Howells's response to these novels seems an example of that receptivity to the new, the untried, even the alien, which ought to be, and sometimes is, characteristic of democratic cultures. Perhaps he could accept these new fictions with such ease and generosity, accept even the prospect of a "New York jargon," because he had himself come from the plebeian Midwest. Now, with a fine sense of American inclusiveness, he had become the friend of both Mark Twain and Henry James, appreciating equally our literary redskins and palefaces, the figures of stubbled vigor and of suave cultivation. Howells took it for granted that in a democratic culture there must be conflict, improvisation, uncertainty, and waste.

Once Emerson and Whitman had brought about their cultural revolu-

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Irving Howe's most recent book is *A Margin of Hope* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). This essay was presented at a recent symposium of the New York Council for the Humanities.

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tion—a real cultural revolution!—in nineteenth-century America, it became commonplace that traditions were not simply a fixed weight to be imported from Europe, like English furniture unloaded at Yankee docks. Traditions had to be taken apart before they could be renewed. They had to be tested: How well would they stand up in the rough American weather? and against those rough American characters? Our culture oscillated between abject submission to European styles and crude rejection of everything coming from the Old World. A long time had to pass before it could reach a secure balance, if indeed it ever has. Our best writers and critics, including the conservative Henry James who late in life enjoyed chanting Whitman's poems, came to recognize that the native culture *had* to be unstable, protean, constantly in ferment. Newer regions of the country—the old Southwest, the Midwest, the Far West—were breaking into our cultural life, often in not very refined ways. A few decades later came the turn of oppressed classes and immigrant communities. The blacks would have to wait.

During Howells's lifetime one of the most vivid cultural incursions came from the Midwest, by writers like Dreiser and Anderson, but by others too, whose work embodied the pathos of a struggle for articulation, a grasping for the sounds of heightened consciousness. Each breakthrough was seen as a threat to established standards by the genteel cultural establishment of the East, and so in truth it was. Inevitably there followed a roughening of language and a coarsening of taste, but also an enlargement of sympathies and the emergence in our literature of figures, themes, and settings previously unseen. There are times when only social turmoil can teach us to notice what has in fact always been before our eyes.

Democratic cultures move ahead, or perhaps only move along, through internal struggle: the struggle of classes, ethnic groups, literary schools, and popular audiences. We should be honest enough to admit that this can lead to a momentary decline or even, in some respects, a permanent decline in cultural standards. There is no inevitable upward progression in cultural any more than in political life, and there may even be—a thought which surely haunts all democrats—an inverse relationship between cultural and political progress. Still, as one looks back upon the cultural struggles in America these past two centuries—the Emersonians against the Brahmins, the realists in fiction against the genteel writers, the crude immigrants against the nativists, the avant-garde modernists against academic traditionalists—it seems that the price of change was usually worth paying. Or that it simply *had* to be paid. Through cultural conflicts both revealing and masking social conflicts, the deprived and neglected would assert their claims upon a culture that, in principle, announced its readiness to embrace all humanity—just as in the first few decades of the twentieth century, the revolutionary innovators in art and literature would enlarge our sense of what tradition might signify by assaulting the prevalent traditions so as finally to elbow their way into them.

EMERSON, in his great essay "The American Scholar," had helped release this sequence of cultural upheavals, and Whitman, in "Democratic Vistas," took a step further, making his quasi-religious exaltation of American possibility the ground for his harsh criticisms of American reality. So, I think, it would always be with us. The writers most captivated by the American myth would, precisely insofar as they were captivated, prove to be the most stringent in their judgments of American experience.

Emerson asked for "confidence in the unsearched might of man"—what a splendid, if unfocused, phrase that is! "The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of a household life, are the topics of the time." They would continue in America to be the topics of the time, enlarged in scope and made subtle through wear, just as the linkage of idealist vision and radical criticism would become a major part of our literary discourse, from Whitman to Van Wyck Brooks and Randolph Bourne, down to F. O. Matthiessen, Richard Chase, and Alfred Kazin.

It's a complex fate being an American, Henry James had said, and surely one of the things he must have meant is that it's especially difficult for us to maintain a cultivated tradition, which means first of all to stay in vital relation to the classical culture of Europe, while also welcoming plebeian newcomers from Mississippi river towns, western mining camps, and New York sweat-

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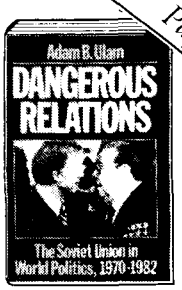

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shops who might be weak in the symbolisms of Dante but were making new rhythms for our prose and verse out of American speech, song, and declamation.

To live by this tension means that cultural standards, never in the past quite so fixed or secure as we sometimes suppose, must always be subject to the bewilderments of a rapidly changing culture. It means that the small community of intellectuals, writers, and scholars professionally devoted to the life of culture, though sometimes fancying itself an aristocracy of letters beyond any soiling plebeian touch, must be ready to welcome into its ranks newcomers who bring with them the unruly, the uncouth, the "barbaric." And we might also trouble to remember that often enough it's the "backward cultures," those coming from preindustrial parts of the world or from oppressed minorities within America, that have most firmly preserved residues of the traditional values our conservative friends say we should cherish. It is at least conceivable that you can find a better sense of Christian values in black spirituals than in some of the protofascist and reactionary writers—Ezra Pound, for one—celebrated in our century.

The flux and tension inherent in a democratic culture make the position of the literary conservative frequently uncomfortable, sometimes untenable, and in extreme instances, rather comic—as in Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady*, where Gilbert Osmond, an ultraconservative expatriate whose main cultural work is the tracing of coins onto tissue paper, declares that if you don't have a tradition you should proceed immediately to get one.

NOW, I DON'T want to suggest that the pattern of cultural incursion and assimilation that I've sketched here has always worked out well. It hasn't. All changes bring losses, and sometimes even the most largehearted observer intent upon keeping a balance between tradition and the individual talent, becomes troubled. Which way shall one turn? Which stress does the moment require? Some insurgencies grow so coarse, as a segment of the 1960s "counterculture" did, that serious people have no choice but to oppose its anti-intellectualism, its dismissal of the past, its contempt for anything not conforming to the most recent improvisations. But by the same token, there are also times when invoking "excellence" and "standards" seems to be at the service of a narrow-spirited cultural exclusiveness, as if the noblest task before us were to repel shirt-sleeved barbarians who claim that they too can read and write.

Standards are best defended not simply by declaring oneself a partisan of Dante, Racine, and Shakespeare, but by a tense engagement with the culture of one's time, in all its unavoidable flaws and confusions. Standards are not ordained from on high by lords of tradition. Standards are not external to our lived experience. Standards are not fixed yardsticks with which we may briskly grade new works of art and literature. The critic isn't a truant officer calling the errant children of culture back to class. No; standards derive from our encounters with new works of art and literature, encounters that must always be troubled and provisional even as they rest upon earlier encounters with the art and literature of the past which, we like to think, we now understand.

For T. S. Eliot,

> Virgil acquires the centrality of the unique classic; he is at the center of European civilization. . . . The Roman Empire and

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the Latin language were not any empire and any language, but an empire and a language with a unique destiny in relation to ourselves. . . .

Eliot speaks of England as a "Latin" country, which may strike us as somewhat strange until we realize he means that its culture has been shaped decisively by the tradition stemming from Virgil. I think it is certainly true that to enjoy the awareness of a firm tie with Virgil's place in European culture may enable us to engage with whatever is fresh and unbidden in our own culture, as it may also enable us to spot whatever is cheap and fake. Yet in acknowledging the centrality of this Western tradition we might also recognize how much it leaves out, how provincial may be its claims to universality, how deaf it is to Hebrew melodies and blind to Oriental designs. And while we're making such acknowledgments, it would also be good to notice that the traditions we respect, and ought to respect, can also get in the way of our poor and modest efforts. For a strong tradition is irksome, it is supposed to be irksome. At once enabling and thwarting, tradition provides us with models, but these can sometimes impede talent through their very power and majesty.

WHEN WE speak of a democratic culture, it's often with the thought in the back of our minds of other cultures, aristocratic and patrician, stable and ordered. Democratic writers have been known to melt before the idea of hierarchy, as democratic politicians to scrape before the presence of royalty. The problem of standards, we like to think, doesn't often arise in a culture where traditions are long-rooted and kept firm by the disciplines of an educated elite. In such a culture there is a line of commanding classics through which its makers and shapers establish a lasting hierarchy of value.

This view of things—it forms a pretty picture—constitutes the cultural vision by which many conservatives would like to live. It is by no means an unworthy vision. In a country like the United States, which suffers from terminal amnesia and oppressive faddism, it helps us keep our cultural balance. That it's hard in fact to think of a moment in history which quite conforms to this cultural vision; that it's a vision most unlikely to be realized in a country like the United States—these facts need not trouble us excessively. Only when there occurs, through rhetorical intimidation or institutional pressure, an effort to impose a fixed prescription on our unruly culture, does trouble begin.

For the realities of cultural life are always more problematic and bewildering—for contemporaries, often opaque—than any theory about it. From a distance, eighteenth-century England may seem to have been blessed with a stately progression of neoclassical geniuses confirming their mirrored relation to classical Rome. But look more closely and you see turmoil and even chaos: a radical recasting of much earlier English literature, especially in the understanding of Shakespeare and the Elizabethans; a depreciation of the Metaphysical poets whom we have recently come to see as primary figures; an unprecedented growth in the number of women writers or "female scribblers," as they were sometimes called; an emergence of a new sensibility in the fiction of Sterne and the verse of Grey and Collins, which literary historians have somewhat lamely called "pre-romantic"; and a deep division between patricians upholding the supremacy of verse and plebeians exercising their energies in prose fiction. This latter conflict expresses itself not only as a new social relationship—the bourgeoisie is rising again!—but as a major change, a sort of leveling-out and opening-up, in the composition of the elite groups that make reputations and establish standards.

Defenders of traditional culture such as Pope and Swift dismiss Daniel Defoe as an adventurer and corrupter of taste. They are right, he is both of these, but he is also a genius. Dr. Johnson writes about the new art of fiction that "if the world be promiscuously described, I cannot see of what use it can be to read the account." Shenstone complains that Richardson has spun out *Clarissa*, "which he scarce could have done had he not been a Printer"—in plain language, a grubby tradesman. Fielding is unhappy that the world of letters is becoming "a democracy or rather a downright anarchy" and that "the offices of criticism" are being taken over by "a large body of irregulars" admitted into the realm of criticism "without knowing one word of the ancient laws." (As a veteran "irregular" I cherish that sentence: certain putdowns seem almost eternal.)

Still, a word of caution. We should not succumb to the relativism this kind of summary might induce, the relativism which suggests that because we know traditions and standards to have changed radically over the ages, there is no discernable continuity within them. For, in the last analysis, the life of culture depends on the belief that, as Frank Kermode writes, "history is, under all the appearances of change, a unity; that the modern is not absolutely new, but a renovation of a classic which the action of time has obscured. . . ." Once we alert ourselves to such possibilities, we find this continuity everywhere. We find it in the sheer extensions of language, in the reappearance of half-forgotten classics, in the rebirth of classics as new, derivative, or minor classics. We find it also in odd cultural transformations, for example, the way Cervantes's amiable mockery of a declining knighthood turns into a celebration by nineteenth-century revolutionists and romantics of "the quixotic." There is a substance that prevails, some deep permanence of value and response—or so we must suppose, even as the present moment puts that belief to a very severe test. For each day we witness the fading of all too many classics, as they slip from works strongly engaging generations of readers to works that cultivated people can still name but do not feel uneasy about not knowing. Perhaps, however, the slow death of secondary classics, the impermanence of the permanent, is also part of what we understand by tradition. "Death"—if I may twist a line from Wallace Stevens—"is the mother of beauty."

ABOUT ONE thing we can be certain: whatever nostalgia we may feel for cultures with firm traditions and secure standards, we aren't very likely soon to see anything of the kind in the United States. It's our fate to live in a constant state of tension between the cultural outlook that would dismiss the past as irrelevant to American experience and the outlook that would exalt the supremacy of the past. Neither alone is very satisfactory, though if forced at gunpoint to choose, I would of course prefer the exaltation of the past.

A more satisfying view can be found in Walt Whitman. He speaks for those "within whose thought rages the battle between democracy's convictions and aspirations, and the people's crudeness, vices, caprices." That battle continues. He speaks for "the high aver-

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age" of art as against "the mean flat average" of what we'd now call mass culture. That contrast remains, sharper than ever. And he hopes to reconcile the life of culture with "the rude spirits of the Democracies"—"to develop, to open up to cultivation, to encourage the possibilities of all beneficent and manly outcroppage. . . ."

BY NOW we realize that this "outcroppage" isn't so easily to be had. At times it's not to be had at all. We must veer and tack, stressing at one moment the traditionalist and at another the populist option. But how shall we know which to favor at any given point? Here we ought to trust our instincts, which will tell us soon enough who is getting to be an overbearing nuisance, who is displaying the "insolence of office." I would propose a rule of thumb: criticize whichever outlook is dominant at the moment, whether in the sphere of cultural opinion or public decision. No one has ever gone very wrong by jabbing at established power.

Today, in our cultural experience, the conservative outlook seems dominant or at least increasingly powerful. What that actually means is:

—a fairly rigid antipathy to anything that in respectable quarters might be regarded as critical of established opinions or institutions;

—an uneasiness with and sometimes distaste for minority subcultures: blacks, women, gays;

—a readiness to celebrate the innovations of yesterday—by now who isn't prepared to be militant on behalf of Joyce and Kafka, Stravinsky and Picasso?—while responding somewhat irritably to innovations that might thrive tomorrow;

—a tendency to advance a supposedly depoliticized (which means a strongly political) view of culture that sees it as a museum of fixed consensual values;

—a nervousness before the idea that the life of culture is intimately related to the conflicts and passions of society;

—a style of self-conscious truculence, at times not very different from those of old Marxist sects and at other times expanding into *arriviste* triumph.

For people with such tastes and inclinations, the praise of "excellence" promises keen comforts. It tells them that they are at home with greatness and at peace with authority. Yet by now, I should think, the very word "excellence" ought to make us cringe a little, so completely has it been assimilated to the prose styles of commission reports, letters of recommendation, and hair-spray commercials.

A cultural style or tone never survives for very long without finding sustenance in the politics of insurgency or establishment. The cultural style or tone of which I speak has its connections with, though it isn't of course as vulgar as, the dominant politics of our moment: the politics of macho swagger, possessive individualism, ideological narrowness, social meanness, and Social Darwinist arrogance.

It is a style to be resisted, not only because it seems inherently deplorable but also because it fails even to meet the test of realism it claims to favor. Look about us in New York City. A million Hispanic people live here, often enough a street or two away from the rest of us. What do we know about their thoughts, their feelings, their culture? How long can we remain ignorant of their grievances and aspirations? Where, among those of us who in our own lifetimes felt only too keenly the sting of discrimination, can be found the equivalent of that splendid WASP writer, Hutchins Hapgood, who in 1902 toured the Lower East Side to learn about the strange ways of noisy immigrant Jews? Who would today venture into unfamiliar streets? Where, today, is our reincarnated William Dean Howells speaking warmly, say, of a *Yekl* with a Spanish accent?

There are traditions and traditions, as there are standards and standards. I think this is a moment to invoke the tradition of fraternity and embrace, Huck with Jim, Ishmael with Queequeg, opening once more upon democratic vistas.

RED, WHITE, AND BLACK

The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade
by Harvey Klehr

(Basic, 511 pp., $26.50)

Communism in Harlem during the Depression
by Mark Naison

(University of Illinois Press, 384 pp., $22.95)

The United States is the one late capitalist country without a major radical movement. Despite this fact, or perhaps because of it, scholars have devoted a great deal of attention to the history of the American Communist Party, the only radical group that had even a small amount of success. By the end of World War II, after all, the American Communist Party had attained a membership of almost ninety thousand, and its influence was felt beyond its own circles.

But the Communist movement failed miserably. The explanations for its failure have taken as many twists and turns as the party line itself; they tend to mirror the era in which they are written. The early years of American Communism were treated by Irving Howe and Lewis Coser in their influential book, *The American Communist Party*. They were analyzed thoroughly in the brilliant works of Theodore Draper, who covered the period from 1919-1930. Draper dealt in particular with the way in which American communism was from its inception subordinate to the Soviet Union. But a new generation of young radical writers, anxious for heroes and a usable past, began to discard that vision and move toward a new extreme. Communists were celebrated as romantics, for example, in Jessica Mitford's *A Fine Old Conflict*. The idealization of American Communists reached its climax in Vivian Gornick's *The Romance of American Communism*, in which she consciously ignored the history and politics of the party and chose instead to celebrate the Communists for "bringing to astonishing life the kind of com-

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radeship that makes swell in men and women the deepest sense of their own humaneness."

Fortunately, recent historians have rejected such politically motivated pretifications, and have begun a more serious and balanced assessment of the American Communist movement. But they, too, have foolishly discarded the thesis developed years ago by Draper, and have created still another mythology. Draper argued that even the party's various efforts to develop an American strain of communism "corresponded to the fluctuation of Russian policy," and did not stem from any "compelling need within the American Communists themselves." Younger scholars like Maurice Isserman have more recently argued that the desire to act like patriotic Americans devoted to democracy may indeed have emanated from the Comintern, but that it was also a felt need among many of the rank and file, who had begun to respond to the American reality rather than to Moscow. Perhaps, but Isserman goes too far in implying that American Communists had begun to act on their own, and were on the road to breaking their ties to Moscow. Similarly, some ex-Communists have argued vociferously that the American C.P. was composed of premature Eurocommunists, men and women who joined during the first and second Popular Front, who welcomed the broad anti-fascist coalition politics of the Roosevelt years. They claim that long before the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935, at which the Bulgarian Communist Dimitroff proclaimed the new policy of a People's Front against Fascism, the American Communists had in practice moved in the same direction.

IT IS THE signal contribution of Harvey Klehr to confront this most recent interpretation of American Communist history, and to conclude that it is a major obfuscation. "The party's lurches," Klehr explains,

> were not in response to any internal changes in American society or the Party itself, but reflected the pull of an external force. If the needs of Russian policy dictated a revolutionary or sectarian Comintern policy, the American Communists swung over to the left. When those needs changed, they swung back to a more reformist or opportunistic line. . . . To pretend otherwise is to misunderstand and distort the history of American Communism and to miss the essential clue about its nature.

Klehr's analysis is based on sources never before used by historians. These include personal files and interviews assembled by Theodore Draper, minutes of closed committee meetings of the party leadership, including critical minutes of the party's important Political Committee, and files obtained from government bureaus under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

Klehr reveals that at virtually every critical juncture in the party's political life its leaders went off to Moscow to find out what position it was appropriate to take. Party strategy for the 1936 Presidential election, for example, was decided in Moscow at a conference between Georgei Dimitroff, Earl Browder, William Z. Foster, and Sam Darcy. Party leaders had been attacking the New Deal and calling for creation of a Farmer-Labor Party. They had condemned the National Recovery Administration as pure and simple fascism, and had called for a struggle of class against class with the goal of imposing a left government.

Foreign policy circumstances forced a drastic change in the line. The growth of the Axis alliance scared Stalin, who ordered an immediate shift from calling for revolution to urging the creation of a "united front from above," in which non-Communists were to be embraced. When the Popular Front was finally declared, its message was that of unity with the liberal bourgeoisie, once the class enemy that was to be scorned at all costs. Hence Browder and Foster again visited Moscow in both June and December 1937, to decide the policy for the American party once and for all. By close scrutiny of the Political Committee minutes, Klehr is able to prove that the key to all policy was approval by the Comintern.

And so the policy changed. Until 1937, the party was denouncing F.D.R. for leading the country to fascism. But as soon as Roosevelt gave his famous Quarantine the Aggressor speech, Browder gave F.D.R. his approval, arguing that the very survival of democracy depended upon "the economic reforms and the peace program of President Roosevelt." Ironically, the New Deal was already in retreat, heading toward a new crash. But this time its glaring inadequacies were overlooked. Anything the party opposed was conveniently blamed on right-wing industrialists and the State Department. "Long scorned as the ultra-leftists of American politics," Klehr writes, "the Communists were now far more moderate than their one-time bête noire, the arch 'social-fascist' Norman Thomas."

OTHERS HAVE argued that it was F.D.R.'s shift to the left in the second New Deal that better explains the party's abrupt about-face. While these policies made the new stance more palatable, Klehr retorts, they were not the decisive factors. The record shows the C.P. was hostile to the Wagner Act when first passed, and that it attacked the Social Security Act as a hoax. "When the Communist Party changed its mind," Klehr writes, "it did so not because Franklin Roosevelt had changed his policies but because the Comintern had changed its ideas." Finally, as the President spoke up for collective security, the party grasped the opportunity, ended all hesitations, and rushed to embrace him. As ardent defenders of bourgeois democracy, the party now declared their forebearer to

"Rise up from the dust and put on your beautiful garments, oh my people." Isaiah

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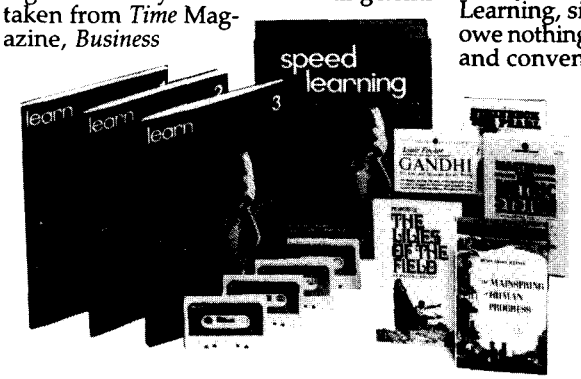

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be not Lenin, but Thomas Jefferson. The goal was now unity behind a lesser evil, what Browder called the "liberal and progressive New Deal."

Mark Naison's study of blacks and Reds during the same period provides a good companion volume to Klehr's. Naison's provocative and solidly researched book forces us to rethink the role that the Reds played in black America. That he is not entirely successful does not diminish the magnitude of his effort. Previous studies have tended to depict black Communists as either dupes of Soviet power or naive militants who were part of a movement that had no indigenous roots. Naison argues that even though not many blacks joined the party, its militancy and sustenance helped develop a culture of protest rather than one of accommodation. Naison sees black Communists as swimming in the same current as other black intellectuals. In particular, they helped stress the importance of an alliance with organized labor, while prodding white labor and liberals to fight on behalf of civil rights.

The party, then, was in some sense a model for black militancy, standing as it did somewhere between the black nationalists and the liberal assimilationists. Still, what Naison asserts, but fails to prove, is that Communist policies were set by local leaders who were independent of party control. He does show that at a time when few whites were willing to work on behalf of civil rights, black Communists were indeed putting the issue on the forefront of their agenda. They sought to eliminate, for example, racial barriers between immigrants and blacks. Naison tells the story of the "trial" of August Yokinen held in 1931. A Finnish worker, Yokinen was charged with supporting the expulsion of blacks from his cultural club's dance. The trial was carefully staged, but it proved to many in the community that the Communists alone stood on the side of black freedom. After the party's vigorous defense of the Scottsboro boys, moreover, the young minister Adam Clayton Powell Jr. proclaimed from his pulpit that "the day will come when being called a Communist will be the highest honor that can be paid an individual and that day is coming soon." It didn't come. But Powell, who worked with the party while remaining outside its ranks, careful always to be somewhat critical of it, did receive his reward; in his early political campaigns the party footed most of the bill.

WHERE NAISON contributes most to our understanding of our image of black Communists is in his discussion of the importance given to cultural questions. Although the party itself never had more than a thousand members in Harlem, even in the midst of the Depression, it made its mark on the consciousness of key members of the black intelligentsia—men like Paul Robeson, Richard Wright, and Langston Hughes. It urged that black history be studied, promoted concerts and black theater groups, and sponsored some of the most innovative cultural events. One party function even included Billie Holiday and Duke Ellington, who entertained at a Harlem dance hall, after which the dancers listened to a political speech by Communist leader William Z. Foster. Naison does not tell us how the dancers responded to the intrusion.

Elephant Hotel

On a narrow slip of sand where the boardwalk
and the spine of the city finally let up,
a ninety-two ton wooden elephant
faces the sea. She stands on hollow legs,
marking the tideline with her old toes, every joint,
Victoriana, still crimped and watertight.

She has survived the whim of her creator,
vacuity, a waterfront hotel
as high as the Sphinx. She is the one
sight-to-see on the honkytonk frontier.
Her hide is painted, sheathed in tin,
a single shade of gray.

Quakers condemned her to South Jersey,
the saltmarsh jungle of bayberry and pine.
A real estate investor promoted her for the crowd.
The Pennsylvania Railroad was laid at her feet.
Steamboats chugged in from Somers Point; stagecoach
connections, mule-drawn trolleys from town.

And they came, pleasure seekers, across the dunes
to sign her guest book and gape.
A stairway spiraled them into her
from the rear, her innards
timbered, partitioned into floors,
eleven rooms with a vaulted hall.

Lovers slept in the summer cottage of her flanks.
Under ruffles and parasols, ladies in corsets
considered the consequences of her enormity, then
climbed up inside her to look out the window in her eye.
They sipped tea in the ornate howdah on her back
and took the tonic of iodine air.

Ocean continues to tease her thick ankles,
spuming foam as white as her unconvincing tusks.
Her trunk hangs limp, noseholes buried in a bucket
not big enough. Sunrise glazes her glass eye
and variegates the pigeons roosting in her ear.
On the rim of the tide, she listens, pokerfaced.

Barbara Helfgott Hyett

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During the Popular Front years, the party's young Turks stressed the indigenous roots of black American music and paid special attention to swing and jazz. A party concert at Carnegie Hall included Fats Waller, Cab Calloway, Eubie Blake, and W. C. Handy. The party, Naison writes, was able to transcend the Comintern's control and stress self-determination for blacks, thereby proclaiming more general cultural imperatives for American society. "By defining black America's struggle for cultural recognition as a source of creative energy for their entire nation," writes Naison, "party spokesmen helped give their white constituency a sense that they had a personal stake in black empowerment and that cultural interchange between the races represented a *defining* feature of the American experience." The struggle for racial equality became part of a movement of cultural regeneration, thus tackling head on the racist argument that equality meant cultural degeneracy. Indeed, the party argued, distinctive black culture added much of value to American culture in general.

NAISON IS far less successful, however, in proving the other part of his thesis, that the black Communists in Harlem were independent of the policies set by the Comintern. Indeed, Naison's thorough research is his own undoing, though he does not seem to know it. The early growth of the party in Harlem, Naison shows, was abruptly undermined when Comintern orders resulted in the introduction of tough new leaders who would defend Stalin's thesis of self-determination in the black belt of the South. The sympathy felt for the party as a result of their single-handed defense of the Scottsboro boys was almost dissipated when the party criticized the Harlem branch for failing to use the issue to deprecate reformist leaders; these instructions shattered the modus vivendi that the party had obtained with N.A.A.C.P. officials. Other party actions also worked to undermine the good relations they had developed. For example, Harlem Communists had worked with church and fraternal groups in a campaign to force chain stores to hire black clerks until they composed half of the work force. The effort was popular, but the new party bigwig James Ford called the campaign to a halt. It did not square with party guidelines for class struggle, since it would antagonize white workers.

Having previously argued that initiatives for a broad coalition policy came from black Communists themselves, Naison is forced to acknowledge that "it took a major change in the Comintern view of the fascist danger" to allow Harlem C.P. leaders to take advantage of the receptivity of their constituents to the idea of forging alliances with labor and the broad mass left. Between 1936 and 1939, under the policy of the United Front, the party became a "free-floating" organization which agreed with the party's objectives but showed independence when it disagreed with a particular line. Lobbying, trade union work, electoral politics, and coalition building slowly came to replace the older and more militant forms of action. Americanization opened up new channels of influence, though it had a negative effect as well, since it put pressure on individual black Communists to dilute their racial militancy.

Coalition politics clearly posed problems. Black Communists were often forced to neglect areas of concern to the Harlem community, such as the hiring of black drivers on the city's buses and trains, lest it disrupt the coalition with important trade union leaders like Mike Quill of the Transport Workers. Such waffling weakened the base of support they had attained, and black nationalists again challenged them for leadership. They were also hurt by the New Deal's failures. The dismantling of the W.P.A. meant a loss of jobs for black workers, and the C.I.O.'s inaction on job discrimination hurt their efforts to forge unity with labor. Naison shows that the black Communists tempered their protest and gave precedence to protecting the C.I.O. unions. Alliances "eroded their aggressiveness," Naison says, leading the Reds to lose touch with the spirit of popular militancy that had been a large source of their appeal.

Whatever gains they made, Naison shows, were all but dissipated with the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which had as disastrous an effect on party work in Harlem as it did on the California movie colony. Nonparty ministers and leaders stopped working with Communists, who were busy whitewashing Nazism and downplaying militancy. The Pact and the Comintern's justification of it, Naison points out, "forced Harlem

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Communists to repudiate many policies that had brought them into the mainstream of black life—it was an invitation to political suicide." Naison's rationalization, that they came to follow the Soviet line from an American need—"a belief that only a Soviet centered internationalism could give blacks the power and strategic insight to escape poverty and eliminate Jim Crow"—is an unconvincing apology.

Naison has given us a comprehensive history of the relationship between blacks and Communists, and has forced us to rethink the assumption that only the party gained something from the relationship. The Reds did indeed leave a legacy of struggle for racial justice, and some of their tactics were later used by former allies, like A. Philip Randolph, who became enemies. But Naison does not grasp the essential point made so cogently by Harvey Klehr: whatever its goals, no movement tied to a foreign ideology and a foreign state can succeed in America.

When all is said and done, Klehr's point is unassailable. When Moscow sneezed, as the old saying goes, the American party reached for its handkerchief. One was never sure where the party would end up. A figure condemned as an American Hitler at one moment might be hailed as a great progressive at another. Those who could not command unswerving devotion to Moscow, who responded to American reality, were forced to leave the party or found themselves expelled. With the appearance of Harvey Klehr's book, there is no longer any excuse (if there ever was) for scholars and activists to fail to comprehend the character of American communism.

RONALD RADOSH

Ronald Radosh, professor of history at Queensborough Community College and at the Graduate Center/CUNY, is co-author of *The Rosenberg File* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston).

WASHINGTON WAYS

Political Innovation in America: The Politics of Policy Initiation by Nelson W. Polsby

(Yale University Press, 185 pp., $18.50)

Political scientists who aim to interpret what goes on in Washington divide into factions—it may be more polite to call them schools of thought—that are nearly as contentious as the partisan or bureaucratic objects of their observation. In earlier generations, historians, lawyers, and political theorists dominated. More recently, the successes of the research techniques developed during World War II have made more fashionable the analytic and quantitative approach of the systems analyst. But the two approaches leave a major gap for those who seek to understand the new developments in the federal government.

Nelson W. Polsby's new book is an impressive effort to fill that gap, and a successful one. It begins with a series of case studies on the initiation of eight major new policies of the postwar era, on the assumption that the case study is "a practical halfway house between arrant speculation and arid precision." What distinguishes this book from many others that have used case studies during this same period is the author's comparative approach: he aims to define the main dimensions of any new policy development, and then to use those dimensions to measure and compare in a systematic way the sample cases, so as to suggest some general propositions about the process of political innovation.

Taken simply as bits of political narrative, the eight case studies make fascinating reading. Three deal with innovations in domestic policy: health insurance, community action programs with their "maximum feasible participation," and the creation of the Council of Economic Advisors. Two are in foreign policy: Truman's decision in 1947 to give aid to Greece and Turkey, and the formulation of the Peace Corps. Three cut across conventional boundaries by dealing with postwar innovations in science policy: civilian control of atomic energy, the creation of the National Science Foundation, and the nuclear test ban treaty. Polsby recognizes that the conventional domestic-foreign distinction does nothing to explain the ways new policies are born. In spite of the fact that many observers assume that foreign policy is the preserve of the executive, these cases suggest that the real story is far more complex. The most significant dimensions of an innovation are very different from the categories related to the separation of powers, or even to the distinction between the politician and the scientific expert.

Before he defines his "dimensions," however, Polsby is frank to acknowledge that it is by no means clear what a policy is. He knows he is working on a subject that cannot be defined in terms that can be identified and measured precisely. To admit that at the outset is a sensible step, but one that is so disrespectful of current academic fashions as to require considerable courage. So he settles for defining a policy innovation (if I may oversimplify his terms) as a development in public affairs that is big, that is a major change in direction, and that has a lasting effect. Next he undertakes to define his "descriptive dimensions"—the kinds of questions that he proposes to ask about each of his policy innovations, in order to see what made them work out as they did. He defines seven of them. He asks, for example, how much time elapsed between the time an idea was proposed and when it was finally enacted. He asks how much the policy was shaped by scientists or specialists, and how much its issues were defined by political generalists. His final "dimension" is the more complex question whether the innovation was one that grew out of a long-recognized need, or whether people failed to see that the need existed until someone discovered a feasible way of dealing with it.

By first narrating his eight cases, and then analyzing them according to his seven "dimensions," Polsby produces an interpretation that is far more systematic than the typical historical essay or institutional description. Indeed, he seems to have tried to guard against making his study an expression of a purely personal or idiosyncratic point of view. He seasoned much of his draft for

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more than ten years, and then, when he got around to interpreting his cases in the light of his "dimensions," he found fourteen graduate students to help by independently grading and classifying his own interpretive ratings. This process, he is quick to admit, did not by any means produce a clearly verifiable series of judgments, but it did help him cut out any quirky or tendentious aspect of his evaluation (as did the good-humored and self-deprecating tone of much of his comment).

POLSBY IS eager to set up a method that may be acceptable generally, and this leads him to hold back from pushing his conclusions too far. Indeed, I was tempted to take his case studies, and his "dimensions," and push them much further into political and constitutional conclusions than he undertook to do. At the very least, it would not be stretching his line of thought to observe that he debunks most explicitly some of the most popular ways of interpreting federal governmental affairs. The old habit of separating the legislative from the administrative process in thinking about public affairs has made for a great deal of sterile scholarship as well as facile journalism. It comes, perhaps, from the popular—especially the populist—faith that the voice of the people and the votes of the legislature ought to determine policies, a simplistic view that makes no allowance for considerations of administrative feasibility or the advice of bureaucratic experts. And it was encouraged by the defense mechanism of the civil service reform movement: in order to make a nonpartisan career service acceptable to politicians, reformers felt they had to argue (putting the blame quite unfairly on the ideas of Woodrow Wilson) that administration was something quite distinct from policy, and administrators ought to be neutral on policy issues as well as in partisan elections.

The picture that Polsby presents is more complex, and much more realistic. The later stages of a policy's incubation are obviously involved with the rivalry between Congressional leaders and the Presidency in the exploitation of a new idea or the solution of a new problem. His stories about the origins of the Atomic Energy Commission, or the Council of Economic Advisors, or the National Science Foundation, are fascinating accounts of the ways in which that rivalry led to essential changes in what seemed to be a straightforward political innovation. But the substance of policy is not affected only by the competition between the powers separated by the Constitution at the top level of the organization chart. The "organizational needs of bureaucracies," he notes, are a "final routine source of stimuli to innovation." For example, his story of the civilian control of atomic energy "started with a scientific laboratory threatened with extinction. As the laboratory searched for ways to remain useful, it began also to seek to innovate and to invent new policies."

The book is full of illustrations of the fact that in the United States there is no such thing as a true bureaucracy. The word is an insult, not a description. In the civil service at its upper levels, every department has a mix of career officers, political appointees, and "in-and-outers," who move back and forth between government and private institutions. No department permits any civilian to become the hierarchical head of its whole career structure, in the way each military service has a chief of staff or a commanding officer; and there is no effective organization of the career civil service throughout the government as a whole. These constraints, coupled with the zealous defense of "freedom of information" by a press with more access to the inside dope on policy development than any other in the world, make for an open system, in which along with politicians the "experts are nearly everywhere." Its conspicuous fault is not domination by a tight bureaucracy, but incoherence and diffusion among a welter of special interests, inside as well as outside the government.

These special interests, Polsby points out, interact with experts and policymakers, and rely on experts for knowledge about the ways in which problems have previously been handled elsewhere, by other countries as well as by state governments and private institutions. The typical interest groups—whether a government agency or a private group like the United Auto Workers or the American Medical Association—"operate through agents, typically 'experts' who focus routinely not on problems of organizational management, but on the cultivation of policy-related ideas."

This interpretation, which is well-documented by the case studies and their analysis, challenges two conventional ways of thinking about government in the United States. One is the assumption of a dichotomy between policy and administration, or between ends and means. Polsby's more realistic view is that you cannot decide what you want to do without knowing whether it is feasible and economical to do it, and that the people who know most about how to do it cannot be left out of the process of decision. No one who follows his argument can miss the point that politicians undertake to make or control a new policy less effectively by voting on ends—that is, by legislating general principles—than by voting on means—such as by creating a new governmental agency, or altering the structure or procedure of an existing one.

As this book digs in some depth into the way new policies are actually developed, it identifies another way in which the American political system is pecu-

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liar. In practice, the boundary between government and private institutions has been getting more and more blurred. This blurring is related, of course, to the movement of both scientists and administrators back and forth between government and private institutions. But it takes two particular forms hardly known in other countries. The case studies make them apparent to any well-informed reader, but the author does not develop them as explicitly as he might. One is the way in which private foundations, with the benefit of tax exemptions, take on essentially public functions that in other countries are governmental. This role has let their officials, operating from a politically sheltered base, play an enterprising part in public policy innovation. In more than half of Polsby's cases, the story would have been quite different if it had not been for the early experimentation by philanthropic foundations on the subject, and for their advice and leadership in the process of legislative enactment.

The other is the way in which, since World War II, new policies have often involved the contracting out of governmental functions to private corporations and institutions for administration. The Atomic Energy Commission and the National Science Foundation relied heavily on this procedure, as did the Medicare program and the Community Action Program. Polsby does not make much of this point, as it seems to me he might well have done; for I cannot imagine a political consensus to establish any of these programs without a previous understanding that the government, while supplying the money, was to leave the actual work to the likes of Cal Tech, Union Carbide, Prudential, Blue Cross, and others—and not to the federal bureaucracy.

These are, I suspect, among the "other unmentioned problems" which Polsby says at the outset he omits from his discussion, knowing his book is "exploratory in character, and the restriction of coverage serves the function of providing a few crude controls so as to assure some sort of comparability between cases." This modest approach, as much as it may reassure the professional political scientist to build on his methodology, will only excite other readers to speculate on the significance of his work for broader issues—especially those of a constitutional nature, involving questions of fundamental democratic responsibility in an age of technological specialization. Polsby is particularly cautious about making comparisons with the way policies are initiated in other political cultures, and prudently refuses to let any such speculation interfere with his effort to make his cases comparable.

That caution leaves to the reader the question how the electorate may hold accountable the chaotic mixture of specialized interests that the book describes so vividly. Can we hope to create a responsible two-party system, in which each party has a coherent ideology that makes sense of issues as diverse as those that arose in these eight cases, to say nothing of others? The old dream of a constitutional change to imitate the parliamentary system was based on that hope. Or are the issues in the modern world so complex and varied—so inconsistent with the variety of class and regional and ethnic interests—as to make it more realistic for the electorate to rely on a crude comparison of the broad sympathies of two rival Presidential candidates, leaving the decisions on specific policies to the looser discipline of Congressional committees and career administrators who are qualified by specialized education and experience?

Polsby does not try to answer such questions, but his book will stimulate readers to think about them. And it will make facile answers unacceptable.

DON K. PRICE

Don K. Price, professor emeritus at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, is the author most recently of *America's Unwritten Constitution: Science, Religion and Political Responsibility* (Louisiana State University Press).

THE SIAMESE CITY

The Wall Jumper
by Peter Schneider
translated by Leigh Hafrey

(Pantheon, 139 pp., $11.95)

On a map of West Berlin, the city is divided by nothing more than a delicate pink dotted line. On a map of East Berlin, "the world ends at the Wall." When reading maps in either "half-city," one learns to allow for political distortion. West Germans, refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of the border, tend to see the Wall metaphorically, as "a mirror that told them, day by day, who was the fairest of them all." East Germans, to whom the watchtowers and barbed wire have come to manifest law and order and the futility of idealism, more often exhibit a defensive complacency about their lives. Yet the obvious differences between the two sides are overshadowed by their disconcerting similiarities. The narrator of Peter Schneider's *The Wall Jumper*, a young West German writer who has spent twenty years observing the effects of partition on the German character, has long suspected that "individuals in Germany are in a frightening way interchangeable." Traveling back and forth across the border, he begins to collect stories from East German friends about "the Siamese city" and the ways in which the antagonism between the two Germanys has formed—and malformed—the lives of their citizens.

The narrator is clearly Schneider himself—a West German novelist, political journalist, and screenplay writer who has lived in West Berlin for two decades. On one level, *The Wall Jumper* describes the narrator's project, to find a "wall jumper"—"the story of a man who loses himself and starts to turn into a nobody. By a chain of circumstances still unknown to me, he becomes a boundary-walker between the two German states." On another level, it represents Schneider's attempt to re-create Germany, "a country which exists only in my memory or my imagination." More a neat composite of parables, descriptive set pieces, and philosophical reflections than a full-fledged novel, *The Wall Jumper* is built upon a recurring riddle: "Where

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does a state end and a self begin?"

The narrator sets out to solve the riddle by piecing together the whimsical tales about wall jumpers with concrete images of everyday life in the two cities (Berliners' murderous driving habits, neighbors' troubles, cryptic news broadcasts). He listens to the stories told by Robert, an émigré poet, and Pommerer, who still lives in the "shadow city." As he compares them to the stories of their own leaden lives, an unsettling pattern emerges. Like the heroes of their tales, all three storytellers have contracted what he calls "the disease of comparison." But the wall jumper's illness is in fact a kind of reckless honesty, manifesting itself in his inability to choose between West and East: "Having come to distrust the hastily adopted identity that both states offer him, he feels at home only on the border." The storytellers' symptoms are more subtle—and perhaps more insidious. They have no reason to go border walking, or even to question their prescribed lives: they have adopted the state's identity as their own.

SCHNEIDER'S narrative, with its interlocking of fact and fantasy, successfully captures the uneasy atmosphere in the two Berlins, where moral compromise and political fabrication are a way of life. In the outlandish exploits of the wall jumpers, as well as in the narrator's more mundane activities, it is often difficult to distinguish the real from the surreal. One of Robert's stories is about a man named Walter Bolle, "who wanted to wage war on the D.D.R. single-handed." Unlike Mr. Kabe, who makes the leap from West to East for the fun of it, or the three boys whose passion for the movies sends them West every Friday night to catch the late show at Kurfürstendamm, Bolle is driven to his urge to conquer the Wall by political delusion. Bolle's idea is to organize a commando group, one in the East and one in the West, that will advance against the Wall and tear it down. The mission is a failure, but Bolle makes quite a career for himself as a double agent. It is never clear whether he is working for the D.D.R. or Western intelligence, and as it turns out, it doesn't make any difference:

> He confirmed the cartoon-like perception each state had of its opposite number, and by playing their projections off against each other, he lived out his own madness. Paradoxically, he could take every step in his double-crossing game with conviction. Participating in the operations of the free Berliners' committee must have seemed as right to him as revealing those operations to the State Security Service. Betraying his Eastern contact officer to his Western counterpart must have seemed as necessary as the reverse. Walter Bolle had got himself into a situation where he stayed truest to himself when he betrayed each German state to the other on orders from both.

THE NARRATOR and his East German friends display a kind of inverse madness: they betray themselves in the name of the state. After Robert tells the story of Bolle, he and the narrator, seated at an outdoor café, witness a demonstration in which a few dozen masked youths move purposefully down the street hurling rocks at store windows. They are told by one of the agitators that it is a protest against a prisoner's starvation. When it is over, a waiter who has been listening to the news says that it is only a rumor; no one has starved. Robert sees it as a setup by the police. "The whole operation was based on a rumor and that's how the public will see it. But someone will die soon enough. Then there won't be any protest, because the demonstrators were wrong the first time. And the police will have an excuse for cordoning off the inner city before any real demonstration occurs." The narrator is incredulous: it is so obviously a spontaneous act of protest. They exchange insults about each other's intellectual and political naiveté, and the disagreement becomes a heated fight: "As a pale light rises over the rooftops, I see us striking out at each other with weary, weighted blows, angrily babbling our lessons, true to the states whose influence we no longer recognize."

Schneider is a deft, economical, and forceful writer. Despite its preoccupation with abstract parallels and paradoxes, this slim novel does have moments when the characters emerge as more than mere reflections of its overriding metaphor. Yet the book's tight schematic structure and Schneider's weakness for didacticism rob it, finally, of the fluidity of fiction.

The narrator's search for the right story, like his desire to break down the political defenses of Robert and Pommerer and his failed love affair with the wildly possessive East German woman, Lena, "grew out of an indefinable yearning

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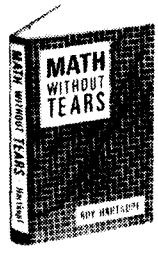

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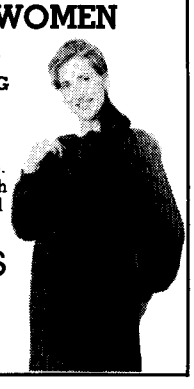

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for completion, for an experience which lay outside of me and couldn't be brought into bounds." The wall jumpers' fanciful leaps seem to be at least a partial vindication of the imagination's capacity to defy political constraints. Yet the right story continues to elude the narrator, and near the end of the novel he says morosely, "It will take us longer to tear down the Wall in our heads than any wrecking company will need for the Wall we can see." *The Wall Jumper* is a startling, if unfinished, exercise in tearing down that Wall.

DOROTHY WICKENDEN

Reconsideration: Jacques Lacan.

THE ANALYST AND THE ABSURD

BY ELAINE HOFFMAN BARUCH

FRENCH psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's seminars were major happenings in Paris, attended by the most brilliant luminaries of the intellectual world. As many as a thousand at a time would rush to hear him, blocking the doors for hours beforehand. They came as much to see Lacan as to hear him speak. His extravagant gestures and flamboyant style—he often wore a purple velvet cape—made his appearance a kind of living theater. Lacan, who claimed only that he wanted to recover Freud, was thrown out of the International Psychoanalytic Association in 1964. At his death in 1981, however, he was hailed as one of the greatest intellectual forces in twentieth-century France. While few claimed to understand him, many called him a genius, others a fraud, and some even proclaimed him both.

Two extraordinary books have recently appeared that seek to come to terms with some of the contradictions surrounding Lacan: Stuart Schneiderman's *Jacques Lacan: The Death of an Intellectual Hero* (Harvard University Press) and Catherine Clément's *The Life and Legends of Jacques Lacan* (Columbia University Press, admirably translated from the French by Arthur Goldhammer). Both are intellectual biographies of considerable daring. Both have two heroes, the author as well as Lacan, and each is a *Bildungsroman* of sorts. But Schneiderman, who was the only American to undergo analysis with Lacan, carried out his quest on foreign shores. Clément, a professor of philosophy, a feminist, and a cultural critic, is French. Her story teems with allusions to the intellectual and political currents of a Paris that was very much her world as well as Lacan's. In some ways, Schneiderman's narrator/hero remains detached, not an unattractive trait in his study of two outsiders. In contrast, Clément's narrative is suffused with love for Lacan—until the disenchantment that so often marks the feminine novel of education.

Though their tones vary, both books capture certain elements of Lacan's thought and style with this difference: unlike Lacan, both are clear. Clément's writing is vividly alive, at once forceful and conversational (she uses questions posed by her 15-year-old daughter to frame her narrative). Schneiderman's lucid prose, by contrast, almost reminds one of Kafka's in its suspenseful unfolding of a mystery. The leaps from one meaning of a word to another, the literalization of metaphor, mark Schneiderman as a Lacanian. An analyst originally trained in literature (he was an English professor at Buffalo), Schneiderman returns to literature again and again, to Shakespeare above all, but sometimes to the classics—Antigone, rather than Oedipus this time, and Aeneas. It is literature that gives this book so much of its richness, as indeed it does to Lacan, and to Freud before him.

Schneiderman has brought all his literary luggage with him and reads Lacan the man like a text. He is right, I think, to treat Lacan not simply as a psychoanalytic thinker, but as a literary character. I would go further and say that Lacan's life and work can best be understood in terms of art—art of a certain kind. Schneiderman compares him to a Shakespearean tragic figure; but in fact Lacan is less like Lear, suffering from the ingratitude of his followers, than he is like the modernist hero, shocking his readers through dislocations of language. The psychoanalyst who made love in the back seat of Paris taxicabs enacted the literary world of the absurd. Rejected by his peers, Lacan is the literary hero of alienation—an outsider surrounded by followers; an adversary hero with groupies.

Because he understood the French temperament and predilection for intellectual games and puzzles, its taste for the poetic and the surreal, Lacan was able to bring Freud to Paris where others had failed. To psychoanalysis, Lacan adds (sometimes he substitutes) concepts of mathematics, philosophy, structural anthropology, and above all linguistics. For him, the unconscious is structured like a language, illustrating the principles of metaphor and metonymy (Freud's displacement and condensation). The unconscious is "the discourse of the Other," that is, of the repressed material which is restored by the analyst. The concept of the Other is a far more complex one for Lacan than for existentialists; it stands variously for another person, culture, the law, the father, and the unconscious, as Clément points out.

In the 1930s, Lacan introduced the concept of the "mirror stage" (which occurs from age 6 to 18 months), "the moment," as Clément puts it, "when one becomes oneself because one is no longer the same as one's mother." Since the sense of identity is often a false one, Lacan concludes that there is a decentering of the subject, a split between ego and subject which is obscured by language. (Here Lacan's theory and life are of a piece, for the notion of the decentered self is in keeping with Lacan's theatricality, his taking on of many roles.) Lacan rejects both the schools of ego-psychology, with their emphasis on adaptation, and the school of object relations, with its stress on completing the self through a partner. His is an antibourgeois psychology which holds out no promise of happiness or even adjustment. That, too, is part of his appeal as a hero.

In the 1950s, Lacan began distinguishing among three orders: the

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imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. The imaginary refers to that pre-Oedipal (and illusory) stage when we feel at one with the mother. Unlike some French feminists who wish to return to this stage either through semiotics or an emphasis on touch and fluidity, Lacan negates it. What is most important for him is the symbolic order, signified by the phallus. We enter the symbolic order when we are introduced to language and the *nom* (name) and *non* (no, prohibition) of the father. According to Juliet Mitchell, "There can be nothing human" for Lacan "that preexists or exists outside the law represented by the father." The real is that which we can never know directly. In his theoretical concepts, particularly the exaltation of the symbolic order, that is, language, Lacan reveals himself to be a modernist.

BOOKS BY JACQUES LACAN AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH

Écrits: A Selection
translated by Alan Sheridan
(Norton, 1977)

The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis
translated by Alan Sheridan
edited by Jacques-Alain Miller
(Norton, 1978)

Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis
translated by Anthony Wilden
(Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981)

It was not Lacan's theories alone, but also his actions, both personal and professional, that marked him as a modernist figure. Schneiderman says that Lacan produced a state of inebriation in Paris. I don't think that this was simply because Lacan brought Freud's ideas, however reinvented, to the French, or even because he showed what analysis is all about by revealing his own desire, as Schneiderman points out. Rather, I think Lacan intoxicated those around him because he represented precisely what the Freudian analysis promised to cure, and in his case didn't. His return to Freud—every year from 1951 on, Lacan expounded on a different Freudian text in his seminars—was as much a rebellion against the father as a resurrection of him. Lacan was a living example of derepression, of verbal and sexual abandon. He attacked and insulted his audience; and Lacan's mistresses, Schneiderman tells us, were almost as numerous as his followers. To be sure, Freud himself had said that the price paid for civilization was too high, that there was too much repression. Was it this idea that Lacan was trying to counteract by his example? Outside the analytic session (and maybe even inside), it was Lacan who was the patient, his own greatest case.

Lacan certainly exasperated his civilized colleagues. There is the matter of the "pass," for example, one procedure instituted by Lacan in the *école freudienne* (the so-called Freudian school founded by Lacan after his expulsion from the I.P.A. and dissolved by him, to the shock of many, in 1980). The "pass" was a rite of passage, whereby the analyst-in-training became an *analyste de l'école*, a theoretician as opposed to a mere practitioner; it was performed not by the candidate but by his peers, who would "pass" his qualifications on to a committee that included Lacan, which then ruled on the candidate without even seeing him.

EVEN MORE infamous was the short session of as little as five minutes (in contrast to the standard fifty-minute hour), the main reason Lacan was expelled from the International Psychoanalytic Association. As Clément points out, "Nothing in theory warrants the setting of a fixed length." Schneiderman defends the short session with great skill as a way of eliminating resistance and procrastination and aiding free association and the transference. Still, he passes too quickly over some of its analytic limitations (for example, it makes or keeps the analysand dependent on outside pressures), to say nothing of its absurdist implications. The short session was a great instance of chutzpah as well as of imagination, an acting out of what other analysts might like to do but don't. Whatever his theoretical justification, Lacan did what he wanted. That's why he was both loved and hated. He was like those other splendid examples in Freud's theory of narcissism, the child and the wild beast, who are seemingly indifferent to those around them and therefore exert a charm on the rest of us who have renounced at least part of our narcissism.

Lacan speaks to our desire for omnipotence. He was both master and disciple, priest and martyr, analyst and patient, writer and critic, linguist and obscurantist, philosopher and surrealist—a figure on whom we can hang all of our fantasies. Clément sees him in anthropological terms as a shaman, something superhuman. In a happy phrase, she calls him "a linguistic transvestite" and analyzes his practice of *midire* or mid-speak, the art of the half-spoken thought," of speaking "not the whole truth" because no one can. We might say that with his plays on words—indeed, his dismemberment of them to give them spatial form—his metaphors, his cryptic syntax, Lacan is the modernist writer who, like Joyce, turns his readers into detectives, or who, like Mallarmé, makes them half creators. Still, many readers feel duped by Lacan; his opaque style is the trouble, a style Clément found more penetrable in his oral teaching than in his writing. Lacan abhorred Freud's popularizers and wanted to avoid his fate. He deliberately chose to be cryptic. Ironically, there is always the question of whether his exegetes misrepresent

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him. Schneiderman, for example, although always with warning, offers some personal interpretations that not all Lacanians would agree with. He presents a new claim (to which his ambiguous subtitle "the death of an intellectual hero" is probably related):

> Psychoanalysis ought to get out of the business of thinking about how people live their lives, about how they behave. What this means, perhaps unexpectedly, is that analysis has as its major task the repairing of the relationships people have, not with other people, but with the dead.

Though Schneiderman says much that is perceptive about the importance of desire in Lacan, he says relatively little about his treatment of women, almost as if he fears treading on that ground. In contrast, much of Clément's book is devoted to that subject, particularly to Lacan's study of female paranoia. The feminist controversy now surrounding Lacan—was he or was he not a misogynist?—is reminiscent of the controversies surrounding Freud. Some who have given up on Freud, however, have been willing to espouse Lacan. The writings collected by Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne* (Norton), which span a period from 1951 to 1975, will be welcomed by readers on both sides of the controversy.

Translated by Rose, these pieces succeed in capturing Lacan's wit and colloquialisms—the other side of his obscurity. But readers expecting easy access to Lacan's theory here will be disappointed. Mitchell relates Lacan's views on femininity to his overall work, and to the psychoanalytic controversies on castration. Rose's introduction, in particular, with its conceptual account of the evolution of Lacan's thought on women, is difficult. Lacan himself, though somewhat clearer than he often is, requires many readings. Easier to follow are the editors' helpful notes before each section and the pieces by Lacan's disciples from the *école freudienne*. In general, the editors adopt a neutral tone and do not grapple with Lacan like his rebellious daughters in France, notably analyst Luce Irigaray. Why should they? They are presenting Lacan, not attacking him, and for their contribution we must be grateful.

Some readers might wonder why the book is not called "female sexuality." "Feminine sexuality" is more accurate, however, since Lacan sees sexuality as a psychic rather than a biological construct, which is why many feminists have been attracted to his work. It is not the penis as biological organ that is superior for Lacan, but rather the penis in its symbolic significance as the phallus within culture. Since cultural valuations can change, anatomy doesn't have to be destiny after all, say his feminist defenders. What is more, Lacan's view of language as a sphere of power seemed a means of liberation to women; they, too, are speaking beings. Because he saw the individual and the social order as intertwined, Lacan enabled a union of psychoanalysis and Marxism to take place in France in that branch of the women's movement known as "*psych et po*" (psychoanalysis and politics), two realms generally kept apart in this country.

BUT THERE are problems. If the privileged phallus is simply a metaphor which is not grounded on irrefutable biological fact, why doesn't Lacan suggest how another system of symbolization might work? Because, we might answer, he is not a utopian. Yet what Mitchell and Rose's selections make clear is that Lacan doesn't so much look at feminine sexuality as he does at women in male fantasy (a worthy undertaking in itself). He deals less with what Freud calls the psychological consequences of the anatomical differences between the sexes than with the psychological consequences in *men* of those differences. But in his twentieth seminar, *Encore* (an ambiguous term meaning more, still, and again), given in 1972-73, he does go beyond the male prism. In answer to Freud's question, "*Was will das Weib?*" "What does the woman want?" he answers, "There is no such thing as *The* woman, where the definite article stands for the universal." Although some critics interpret this negatively to mean that woman has no identity, I see it as a departure from stereotyping.

When he tries to explain the female *jouissance*, a term that he did not want translated, meaning orgasm and more than pleasure, Lacan realizes, with unusual modesty, that he cannot. Yet in his analysis of Bernini's statue of St. Theresa, Lacan asserts without reservation what many have thought and not dared to say, "she's coming, there is no doubt about it." For all his seeming glo-

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rification of the privileged position of the phallus in the symbolic order, he recognizes that the penis depends on the desire of the Other, and what is more, that there is a *jouissance* beyond the phallus. "I believe in the *jouissance* of the woman in so far as it is something more, on condition that you screen off that *something more*, until I have properly explained it." An instance of Lacanian largesse and arrogance at the same time. One might say that if women have penis envy or phallus envy, then men have *jouissance* envy, that is, an envy of women's sexual experience. And that sexual experience, we might add, has something to do with not having a penis. But Lacan only hints at this latter possibility, and in the last piece here he is back to the male perspective, and woman is described as a "symptom" for the man.

Underneath all the seemingly revolutionary implications of Lacan, we are left with the old hierarchical system after all. Women are still subordinate to men and body is still subordinate to spirit or, in Lacan's case, language. Below all the pyrotechnics are the old landmarks. Discomforting as it is, we are home.

BRIEF REVIEW

Presence
by Alan Williamson

(Knopf, 82 pp., $11.95, $6.95 paper)

Alan Williamson has been publishing poetry in little (and not-so-little) magazines for over a decade, but he has probably been better known, until now, as a critic than as a poet. *Presence* should change that. Readers who know Williamson's critical study of Robert Lowell will doubtless look for Lowell's influence in these poems. It is there, to be sure, but what strikes me is not only how well Williamson has assimilated that influence to his own ends, but how much of his poetry is quite un-Lowellian; like Frank Bidart, he has learned from Lowell without becoming derivative. A less obvious influence (but, I suspect, a liberating one) is that of the German poet Rilke, who provides Williamson with epigraphs for two poems and the last line for a third, "Bernini's Proserpine."

One might guess that Rilke showed Williamson a path to his own style, for Williamson's best work is quiet and intimate, like Rilke's, rather than explosive and self-dramatizing. And it is not all that explicit in its autobiography. One couldn't—and wouldn't want to—construct a narrative of the poet's life from his poems. The first poem in the collection, "Friends Who Have Failed," at once establishes Williamson's distinctive tone. After wondering why the world rejects the "fineness" of brilliant failure in favor of "clumsier juggling," he realizes that

> we have not understood the world; how its way
> is to destroy without destroying, the way air
> levels a mountain; things fly apart in a vacuum . . .
> It wears us to the hard thing we cannot help being;
> and if the only hard thing is our determination
> not to be hard, it wears us down to that.

This passage reveals one of Williamson's greatest gifts: the lucid definition of psychological processes that ordinarily cannot be made articulate. The autobiographical, for him, is more a Proustian retrieval of the past than a Lowellian confession, as in these lines describing his return to the apartment building he grew up in:

> And in that weightlessness, you think
> again of your father; how he came here late
> and many times uprooted; how this address for him
>
> was accidental, sad, a place to write immobile
> (as you do now) between his bed and a slice of winter
> sunlight past smokestacks—that, for you, is ruby-solid,
>
> except the music, the reaching . . . You return, and penetrate
> the back court far enough to see his window,
> then melt like a ghost as the janitor's son, the janitor
>
> now, his father's great-bellied image, turns
> from the new steel fence at the alley entrance.
>
> ("Hyde Park at Thirty-Five")

Moreover, Williamson seems less intent on telling his own story than on elicit-

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ing the poetry from other lives that have touched his own. One comes away with clear and moving recollections of his father, of his short-lived friend Joel Sunderman, and of the unnamed girl in "Bernini's Proserpine." Autobiography becomes the means of preserving from oblivion what one has known and loved, rather than a rite of exorcism or a cure of the soul.

Williamson's language is almost unfailingly subtle and musical, if occasionally too tentative (his fondness for sentences trailing off in ellipses is revealing). The best poems, I think, aside from the two already quoted, are "Bernini's Proserpine," "For Robinson Jeffers," "A Progress of the Soul," "The First Spring Nights," and "Old Toys Come Back." Few first collections contain seven poems as good as these; most contain none.

PAUL BRESLIN

Paul Breslin is associate professor of English at Northwestern University.

TRB, *from page 4*

automobile domestic content bill, he said, "There are two functions on domestic content," then veered into "the four points I've been making on agriculture." Running his "education policy" tape on fast-forward to get it all in before the buzzer, he called to mind that cartoon where Mickey Mouse tries to play the "Minute Waltz" in less than a minute.

And the front-runner? Mondale seems to have decided that the safest way to deal with criticism is simple bluff and bluster. Special interests? Why, he didn't chase after the A.F.L.-C.I.O. endorsement. "As a matter of fact, they came to me. . . ." Sure. Asked a perfectly reasonable question about why, in 1981, he had helped lobby through an anticonsumer natural gas pipeline bill (correct answer: $43,750), Mondale performed a stagily self-righteous tirade about his "honorable and decent public and private life."

By Washington standards, Mondale's decision to get rich after 1980 by selling his influence and name to corporations was absolutely unexceptionable. In fact, he showed more restraint than many. But this lobbying issue nicely illustrates the split personality of Mondale's campaign. On the one hand, he's the tribune of the poor and the working stiff. On the other hand, his brilliant campaign is the greatest achievement yet of the hermetic world of affluent Washington political professionals. After the Iowa debate, Mondale rushed to a union meeting and gave a rather good tub-thumper about Reagan's perfidy and how high-income people should "join the rest of us" for a change. Then he rushed off in a cloud of bright-eyed young aides in crisp white shirts, while the audience stayed on to sing "Solidarity Forever."

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

Otto Klemperer: His Life and Times, Volume I: 1885-1933, by Peter Heyworth (Cambridge University Press). A groundbreaking account of one of the great musical figures of the century. (Reviewed 2/27/84)

Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World by David S. Landes (Harvard University Press). A lucid history of the mechanics and meanings of time. (10/10/83)

Family Portrait with Fidel: A Memoir by Carlos Franqui (Random House). A former confidant of Castro sheds light on the origins and the failures of the Cuban Revolution. (2/20/84)

Wonderful Fool by Shusaku Endo (Harper & Row/Kodansha International). A broadly humorous novel about a Christian's alienation in Japan. (12/26/83)

Politics in the Ancient World by M. I. Finley (Cambridge University Press). This skillful study examines the nature of political participation in the polis. (12/12/83)

A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America by Patricia Cline Cohen (University of Chicago Press). A well-crafted study of the emergence of quantification in American culture. (2/13/84)

Louis Armstrong: American Genius by James Lincoln Collier (Oxford University Press). A full and perceptive portrait, which includes learned discussions of his music. (1/30/84)

Midsummer by Derek Walcott (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). A masterful fifty-four-poem sequence, which establishes the poet's place at the center of current English poetry. (1/23/84)

Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age, Volume Three: Dean Swift by Irvin Ehrenpreis (Harvard University Press). An exhaustive, often elegant treatment of the writer's last years. (2/13/84)

Stones for Ibarra by Harriet Doerr (Viking). A strikingly crafted first novel that tells fateful tales of life and death in a remote Mexican village. (1/30/84)

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

Moscow is destabilizing, whatever the Soviets have done. And the invasion of Grenada, far from being a litmus test, was a poorly planned, costly diversion to take our minds off the murdered Marines. Since we are not in the U.S.S.R., the question of the legality of the move should have been raised.

Can you really doubt that a Democratic President, a Mondale or Glenn, would have a saner, more cogent foreign policy than Reagan?

MILTON MCDONALD
Fayetteville, North Carolina

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

To the editor:

Ed Meese complains that he has seen "no authoritative figures"on hunger in America ("Banquets and Breadlines," TNR, January 9 & 16), then cites "considerable evidence" that soup lines are being abused. Did anyone ask just what the evidence was? I may be wrong, but I'll bet it was just "anecdotal stuff."

PHILIP B. TAFT JR.
Pennington, New Jersey

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Generations

THERE'S BEEN a lot of talk lately about generational politics. It is Gary Hart's one hope for '84, and one of several hopes now being road tested by young Democrats like Senator Joseph Biden, whose eyes are trained on '88. Its theme, summarized easily and without doing the idea any great violence, is that we need—and have at hand if we but ask—a new generation of leadership with new ideas to solve the new problems of the future. The alternative is an old generation still applying old solutions to old problems. The idea is being pushed by pollster Pat Caddell, surely the most overrated 1-2 pitcher (McGovern 1972 [L], Carter 1976 [W], Carter 1980 [L]) in the history of Presidential politics. It might be prudent for the Democratic Party to stop him before he kills again. My contribution to this effort will be to ask: What exactly does this generational shtick mean?

SINCE IT IS being performed by energetic young politicians all under 50 (though some just barely), one can be forgiven for suspecting that it is an appeal to youth for its own sake. It conveniently excludes established figures like Walter Mondale (56) and John Glenn (62), and, of course, Ronald Reagan (73). Now, against a President who, for reasons still to be elucidated by political science, can make people feel young and hopeful, Democrats may need a candidate who can neutralize the youth-hope-future issue. A pretty young face may be the most direct way to approach the problem. Thus the only sensible explanation for the whole generational idea is that it is a naked appeal based on age. That, however, its practitioners vehemently deny. Gary Hart stresses that when he says new generation he means new ideas. Trouble is, he says little else. As one voter put it after the New Hampshire debate, "He wasn't contrasting what Mondale said with his own ideas, but he was just giving us the idea that you need new ideas." One new idea is industrial policy. Yet when government-industry-labor cooperation was not an idea but a real plan to save Chrysler, Hart voted against it. Senator Biden, our lunch guest at THE NEW REPUBLIC the other day, also denies that he deserves support simply because of his age (41). He takes a slightly different approach. What makes his generation so special, he claims, is its collective experience. It is the child of Vietnam and the 1970s, and thus has a kind of experience the older generation simply cannot understand. It is a curious claim. After all, the older generation, from Mondale to Reagan to Deng Xiao Ping, went through the '60s and '70s too. (The only ones who didn't are dead and thus not candidates for public office.) What differentiates a Mondale and a Reagan from a Biden and a Hart is not what the younger guys *did* experience, but what they *didn't*: the Depression, World War II, the early nuclear years. The real boast of the younger generation is its *absence* of experience. These politicians have no memory of the American midcentury. Granted, it is not their fault. But is it a political asset? I never liked John Kennedy's congratulating his generation for being "born in this century," as if somehow Eisenhower was a nineteenth-century man. I like it less when the younger politicians today claim that having missed the greatest trials and triumphs of the century is some special qualification for the Presidency.

THE MORE I HEAR this generational rubbish, the more I like Mondale. (Full disclosure statement: I've always liked him. I was a speechwriter for Mr. Mondale when he was Vice President.) Mondale is running on the only logical and honest theme a Democrat can run on: fairness, which is lowercase for New Deal and Fair Deal, and is, in reality, less a theme than an instrument of coalition politics. Coalition politics, now called special interest politics, was the heart of Democratic politics when the new generation was just another project in the mind of the older one. And, we tend to forget, Democrats won then. What could be simpler or more honestly felt for an old D.F.L.er like Mondale than to stitch together a coalition to run against the party of the rich? He has roots and he has memory. That makes him not only the most worthy Democrat but the most likely to win.

GENERATIONAL POLITICS is Hart's idiosyncratic refrain in the Presidential choir. Lebanon is the group chorus. Now that the President has redeployed the Marines two-and-a-half miles to the west, as Secretary Weinberger likes to put it (which, I suppose, makes Dunkirk a redeployment forty miles to the west), the candidates are falling over each other to declare Reagan's Lebanon policy a failure. A correct assessment, most likely, though the final verdict has yet to come in. But as an accusation, it sets a new standard for chutzpah. After all, to call something a failure, one must have some definition of success. In this case success means keeping the pro-American, moderate, central government intact and in power. But here is a group of candidates whose only disagreement with the President is that all would have abandoned Mr. Gemayel earlier, and some more thoroughly—Jackson, McGovern, and Cranston want the fleet, not just the Marines, withdrawn forthwith. To a man, they are all for failure; their only complaint against the President is that he tried, and, for now, is trying still to avert it.

WHEN WORD was brought to waiting newsmen that Silent Cal Coolidge had just died, one wit asked, "How could they tell?". That seemed the logical question when the news came of the death, or, as John Glenn put it, the "final demise," of Yuri Andropov. Instead, everyone asked who the next Soviet leader would be, and started looking for a sign. In the United States, the winner of the New Hampshire primary usually has an even money chance at the Presidency. The Soviets have, it turns out, an even more reliable indicator: top billing on the dead leader's funeral arrangements committee. Past arrangers include Stalin (for Lenin), Khrushchev (for Stalin), and Andropov (for Brezhnev). The smart money was thus on Chernenko from the start. There's a certain harmony here. A petrified regime, so cold and dead that it has killed the totalitarian ideal itself (and replaced it, as Michael Walzer points out, with a facsimile: "failed totalitarianism"), marks its future leader by bestowing on him the distinct honor of disposing of his predecessor's body. A scene of greater spiritual desolation than these Soviet funerals is hard to imagine. They make as good a case in favor of religion (or rather: against philosophical materialism) as this world can provide.

C.K.

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